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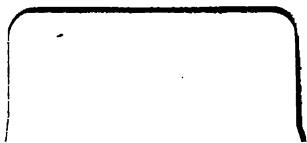
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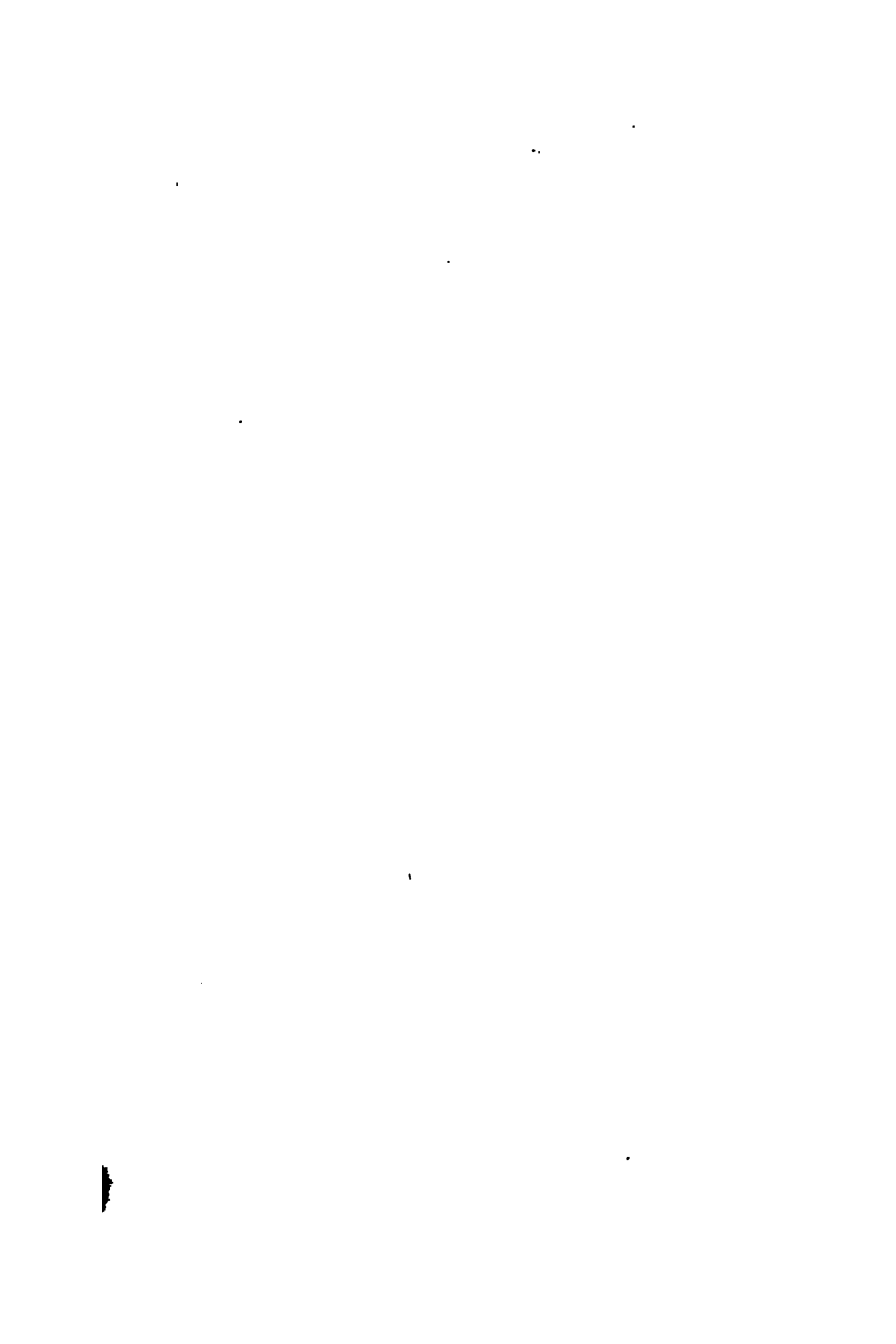
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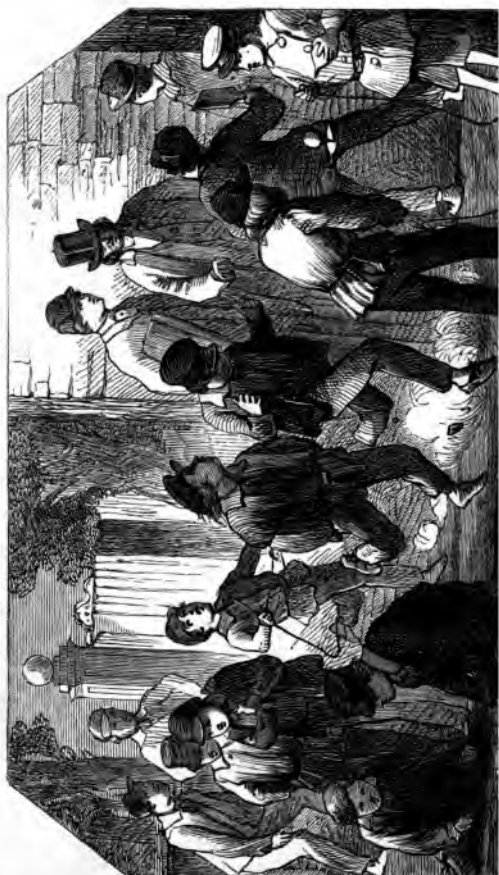




THE PLAYGROUND.







THE
PLAYGROUND;
OR,
THE BOY'S BOOK OF GAMES.

BY
GEORGE FORREST, Esq. M.A.
EDITOR OF "EVERY BOY'S BOOK," ETC.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following pages contain a series of Games adapted to boys of various ages, and arranged suitably to the season of the Schoolboy's year.

Not only as Schoolboy, but as Schoolmaster, I have joined in these Games; and I think in both cases with equal zest. For I have always endeavoured, as far as possible, to identify myself with my boys in their sports, as well as in the graver, but hardly more important, tasks of the School-room. I like to see a boy play as if he meant it, and one who dawdles through his sports will generally do the same through his lessons.

Many of my old pupils, to whom I affectionately dedicate this little work, will doubtlessly recognise

themselves under the garb of other names. And I sincerely hope that they may find as great pleasure in recalling many of our joint achievements, as I have found in recording them.

I have avoided, as far as possible, all formality ; and by throwing the work into the form of a narrative, following the history of a single boy through one year of School life, have been able to dispense with the dry and often obscure rules that generally form the substance of similar works.

G. F.

LONDON.

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4

THE PLAY-GROUND.

CHAPTER I.

TOM WHITE AND HIS FAMILY—HIS FATHER LEAVES ENGLAND AND PLACES HIM AT SCHOOL—DR. BENSON—THE JOURNEY TO KINGSTON — THE CLEVER PONY — ARRIVAL AT KINGSTON — TOM'S SCHOOLFELLOWS.

THOMAS WHITE was the only son of a gentleman of fortune, residing in the neighbourhood of London. Mr. White had four daughters, two of them much older and two younger than Tom, who, at the time at which our story begins, had just reached the age of ten years.

As Mr. White was not engaged in business, he devoted a large portion of his time to the instruction of his little boy, paying particular attention to the groundwork of education. For he wisely thought that it was not sufficient that a boy should have a great knowledge of words, and that he should be able to repeat by rote

the whole of the Latin grammar, but that he should thoroughly understand that which he did learn.

As a necessary consequence of this course of teaching, little Tom, although perhaps not so forward in the pages of books as many boys of the same age, was yet thoroughly versed in every branch of knowledge that he professed to know, and bid fair, in the eyes of those accustomed to look beneath the mere surface, to pass many boys who made a greater show, but were not so well grounded.

About this time the sudden death of a friend on the Continent forced Mr. White to take a journey into Russia for the purpose of settling his affairs, and to break off for a time his course of teaching.

He therefore determined during the interval to place his boy at some good school, during his absence.

This change was rather distasteful to Mr. White, but he consoled himself with the thought that it would bring with it advantages that would compensate for the check that must be given to his own system of education.

For little Tom was of a very sweet temper, industrious and obliging, and was therefore a general favourite. But, being the only son, he was a little too

much petted by his elder sisters, and a little too much revered by the younger ; and not having any opportunities of mixing with boys of his own age, he was quite ignorant of ordinary boyish sports, and had not that readiness of action and firmness of frame that ought to belong to a boy of his age.

Dr. Benson, a clergyman with whom he had long been acquainted, was the person to whose care Mr. White determined to consign his son. This gentleman had once been in charge of a populous parish, where he was universally beloved by those over whom he was placed. He was, however, reluctantly obliged to retire from his charge by a severe illness, which had left him in so feeble a state of health, that he had been prohibited from exerting his voice in the church, or from exposing himself to the inclemencies of the weather.

He had, therefore, for some years betaken himself to another class of ministerial labour, that of bringing up the young, and took charge of a limited number of boys, whom he educated with his own sons.

Just about this time, the eldest pupil had left his house to proceed to the University, and he was much gratified that he could receive the son of his old friend to fill up the vacancy.

This change was the better for little Tom, as Dr. Benson's house was situated in a village in Sussex, not many miles from the sea-coast, and therefore his boys enjoyed the advantages of excellent air, and plenty of space for their rambles.

Beside these advantages, his eldest son, who had already taken his degree, had not only educated his mind in the lecture-room and at the desk, but his body in the gymnasium and the fencing-room. The water was to him as the land to most people, whether he was rowing or sailing upon it, skating on the frozen surface, or swimming with equal ease in the smooth river waters or the angry sea. In fact, he used to say laughingly of himself, that he must have been originally intended for a seal, and to have been gifted with legs for the purpose of skating upon the ice as well as swimming under it. The boys indeed firmly believed that he could do everything but fly, and after they saw him hang up a cord after the manner of the slack rope at a circus, and exercise upon it just as they had seen the famous rope-dancer do, they could hardly have been astonished if he *had* flown.

At the time when Mr. White was obliged to leave England, Mr. Edward Benson was staying at his father's



house, where he intended to remain for the next year, until he completed his course of theological reading, as he intended in a year's time to take orders.

He had always been of the greatest help to his father, by taking charge of the boys during their hours of play, and teaching them many of those exercises in which he himself excelled.

And in the course of a year or two he had succeeded in training them so well that they were capable of performing feats that quite terrified anxious parents who came to visit their sons at Dr. Benson's, although the adventurous boys were quite as safe as if sitting in an arm-chair on the ground-floor. So that nothing could have been more propitious than the present occasion, for that development of little Tom's frame, for which his father was anxious.

Although the boy heard with delight that he was for a time to go among playfellows of his own age, and become a "schoolboy;" yet, as the time of separation drew near, his courage failed him gradually, and when the day actually came, and the carriage stood at the door, his firmness gave way altogether, and burying his face among the cushions, he burst into a passion of tears. His father did not attempt to restrain his emo-

tion, but let his grief have its course, and in a quarter of an hour he was sufficiently recovered to talk with tolerable composure.

In half-an-hour they had reached the railway station and seated themselves in the carriages ; the whistle was sounded, and the train dashed at once into the open country.

The variety and novelty of the objects around him, attracted the little boy's attention, so that he quite forgot his sorrow, and the time passed so rapidly with questions and answers, that he felt half disappointed when the train stopped at the station where they were to meet Dr. Benson.

They had hardly descended from the train, when Mr. White hurried forward towards an elderly gentleman with a peculiarly mild and gentle expression, who was looking into the various carriages as if to search for some one whom he knew. This was Dr. Benson ; and after he had shaken hands with Tom, who was rather awed at his new preceptor, he gathered together the baggage of the two, and directed the porter to put them in his carriage, which was waiting outside the station.

He and Mr. White sat in front and Tom behind

them ; for he preferred to drive the horse, who being a character, in his way, required to be understood.

The two old friends soon began to talk of old times, and became absorbed in their reminiscences, so that they did not notice the gradual decrease of the pony's pace, which became slower and slower, until at last they were roused by finding themselves standing still.

"There!" said Dr. Benson, "that is the way in which he always behaves. If I do not speak, or only talk in an ordinary tone, Tommy—for he is a namesake of your boy there—trots on quite correctly. But if he hears earnest tones behind him, he knows that his driver's thoughts are otherwise engaged than on his speed, and so he slackens his pace exactly in proportion to the earnestness of the conversation, until he sometimes, as you see, stops entirely. Get on, you absurd quadruped!" Whereupon the horse, perfectly understanding that his driver was now awakened, set off at a brisk trot, and did not stop until he drew up of his own accord at the door of Dr. Benson's house.

A broad-faced, good-humoured looking lad here came out of the gate, to take charge of the pony, who first bit at him in sport, and then rubbed his nose against the lad's shoulder.

"Welcome to Kingston!" said Dr. Benson, as he opened the door and ushered Mr. White and his son into the house.

Little Tom looked about him in some anxiety respecting his future residence, and was attracted by the sound of merry voices to the window, which opened upon a little flower-garden bordered by a hedge. Beyond the hedge was a field, where several boys were running about, engaged in some game which Tom did not understand.

"Ah!" said the Doctor, "there are your companions. That tall boy with the light hair and without a cap, is my second son James; I intend him for Addiscombe. That short, sturdy fellow, with a red face and the loud voice, is my third boy, George. Great genius has that boy for climbing trees," said he, turning to Mr. White. "I don't think that there is a nest within five miles that he has not looked into; and if his neck could have been broken, broken it would have been long ago. He never hurts himself though, for his fingers are like so many fishhooks; and if a spider's web were in the way, I think he would hang on to it. I wish that his clothes were as invulnerable as his neck."

"You take these things quietly," said Mr. White.

"To be sure I do," replied the Doctor; "it is the simplest way. Boys hurt themselves just as much in a room or on the grass, as by climbing. Why, there is William Poyning, who has just left me—he slipped down in the cricket-field, broke his leg, was laid up for six weeks, and lamed for as many months; while my boy George falls out of a tree, or topples down a ravine, and thinks nothing of it."

"Well," said Mr. White, "if I were to see *my* boy perched on the top of that elm like a young rook, I should be terrified out of my senses."

"Ah!" said the Doctor, "you have one boy, I have six, and consequently I can only spare one-sixth of my compassion to each of them. Let me advise you to strengthen your senses, my dear friend; for when you come back again, if you do not see your boy among the foremost here, I am more mistaken than I ever have been yet. There is not much strength in the boy as yet, but I like his eye, and he only needs opportunity to become bold and daring as the rest." Mr. White did not reply, but shook his head doubtfully.

"The other two boys," continued the Doctor, "are called Jackson and Seymour, and there is a smaller one, about nine years old, named Price, and you two little

fellows will get on well together. There are six others, whom you do not see just now. They are neighbours of ours, and they only come during school-hours. Sometimes they stay with my boys on a half-holiday, but they usually go home. You will meet them to-morrow in the school-room." Just then a bell began to ring, and the boys left their play, put on their jackets, and came towards the house.

"That is the tea-bell," said Dr. Benson, "and we shall all meet in the dining-room in a quarter of an hour." The whole party soon assembled, and Tom made acquaintance with the boys whom he had seen in the field and also with little Price, who had been hidden from him by the hedge. At first the boys were rather constrained by the presence of a stranger, but their constraint soon wore off; and after they had asked and answered a few questions mutually with Tom, they became capital friends.

Tea being over, Dr. Benson directed his son James to take the new comer into the playing field, and make him as comfortable as they could. Accordingly, the whole party adjourned to the field where Tom had seen them playing.

CHAPTER II.

“TOUCH” — CARE TO AVOID TAKING COLD — “CROSS-TOUCH” —
END OF TOM’S FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL — PORRIDGE AND HUNGER
— “OLD MAN” — TOM LEARNS ENDURANCE — THE BOYS’ MU-
SEUM — MR. WHITE’S DEPARTURE — TOM BECOMES A SCHOOLBOY
IN EARNEST.

“WHAT game shall we play at?” asked Jackson.
“Oh!” replied James, “let us go on with our game
which we were playing when the tea-bell rang. Can
you play at ‘Touch,’ White?”

“No,” said Tom; “and I never even heard of it.”

“Well,” answered James, “it don’t require much
learning, and it is a good game to begin with, especially
as the weather is too cold for us to be standing about
much. One of us calls himself Touch, and runs after the
others, trying to touch them, while they run away as if
he were a mad dog trying to bite them. If he touches
one of them, that boy becomes Touch in his turn, and
runs after the others. Do you understand that?”

“Oh yes!” said Tom; “that is easy enough.”

"Very well, then ; look out, and run away from me, for I am going to be Touch."

James then shouted out the word "Touch," and began to chase the other boys, who ran away, and turned and shifted their ground with such readiness, that Tom, who had never been engaged in any sports but those in which his little sisters could take part, and in which he was their superior, was quite astonished.

However, he soon entered into the spirit of the game, and ran and shouted with the rest of the boys.

Very soon James touched Jackson, who in his turn succeeded in touching George.

Up to that time they had not pursued Tom, because he was unaccustomed to the game, but George determined to see how long the little fellow could run, and so chased him perseveringly, though not intending to touch him, until in a few minutes poor little Tom was quite exhausted, and sat down panting for breath.

"Hallo, White !" cried George ; "tired already ?"

"No," answered Tom, "not tired, only out of breath."

"Never mind your breath," said George ; "you must not sit down on the ground when you are so hot, or you will catch cold in five minutes. Come, jump up and

keep moving. You are not used to running now, but you will soon learn to run about all the morning without being tired."

So Tom, rather reluctantly, got up ; and as he was not chased for some minutes, he recovered his breath again.

"Now," said James, "we will have 'Cross-touch !'"

"What is that ?" asked Tom.

"Quite as simple as ordinary Touch," replied James. "Suppose I were Touch, and running after you. Then, if George runs between us, I must leave you and go after him only ; and if Seymour then runs between us, I must leave George and run after Seymour."

"I see," said Tom ; "you choose one person to run after ; and any one can make you run after himself, by getting between you."

"Just so," said James ; "and not only that, but if Touch is running after a boy who is too swift for him, he may contrive so that a boy whom he can catch gets between him and the boy whom he is chasing, and so he touches him before the boy knows what has happened."

The game then recommenced with energy, and much was the laughter at the narrow escapes and dashing actions of the players. Tom himself was several times touched unawares, forgetful that he had passed

between the two runners, but in a short time he became more wary; and when he had succeeded in touching Seymour by employing the same stratagem, his delight and exultation were exceeding.

After another half-hour had been spent, evening had come on so fast that the boys could hardly see each other's faces. They therefore resumed their jackets, which they had laid aside when they began to feel heated, and returned to the house.

By this time, Tom was so thoroughly tired that he was glad to hear the bell ring for bed-time.

Next morning, the sun was shining brightly into the room, when George Benson woke up little Tom from his slumbers, and directed him to be in the dining-room in half-an-hour.

When he reached the room, he found there his father and Doctor Benson. "Well, my little man," said the Doctor; "how are you to-day after your fatigue?"

"Very well, indeed, Sir, I thank you," said Tom; "but I feel pains in my back and arms and legs, when I move."

"Oh! stiff, I suppose, after unwonted exercise—it will soon go off, when you have run about a little more. The boys have been at their work these two hours, and

are now having a game at some novel play called 'Old Man,' that has lately sprung up. I do not know what it is, but they shout and scream wonderfully. I came and looked at you when the morning bell rang, but you were so fast asleep that I would not disturb you, especially as it was your first day at school. Here come the boys to breakfast ; and if they are as hungry as they are hot, there will be a call for porridge."

"What *do* you mean ?" asked Mr. White ; "is there any link between heat and porridge ?"

"I cannot say," replied the Doctor ; "but there certainly is one between porridge and hunger. The fact is, that when these boys have been working in school for a couple of hours, and then playing with all their might for half-an-hour, they become so outrageously hungry that they would devastate a baker's shop, and hardly be satisfied. So we have a tacit understanding that if they can induce the cook to make them each a basin of porridge, they are at liberty to do so. I make no doubt but they have waylaid the cook already."

Presently the boys entered, and after greeting the two visitors, took their places at the breakfast-table, on which six bowls of porridge were speedily placed, together with numerous piles of bread and butter.

Mr. White looked at the pyramids of bread, and at the porridge bowls, with so evident an air of wonder, that Dr. Benson could not refrain from a smile.

However, in a short time, bowls and pyramids were finished, together with an after supply of the latter, and the boys obtained leave to resume their noisy play.

Tom looked wistfully after them, but Dr. Benson answered his look by saying, "Not this morning; I want to find out what you have in that little head of yours, before your father goes away ; so come to my study."

And giving Tom his hand, he led him into his own room, where Tom's heart sank within him as he saw the walls lined with books, every word of which he was persuaded that Dr. Benson knew, and which he thought that he should have to learn.

However, he was relieved by a conversation with the Doctor, who soon discovered that he had been thoroughly grounded by his father, and that he was likely to do well.

Tom was then dismissed to his companions with a message that the school-time was postponed for half-an-hour.

The sound of voices guided him to the place where

the boys were playing—a small farm-yard, with six or seven stacks of wheat and beans. Among them the boys were running, while every now and then the words, "Old man," became distinguishable.

When they saw Tom they stopped their play, and he gave them the Doctor's message.

"That is capital!" cried George; "come and play at 'Old man' with us."

"I do not know the game," replied Tom; "how is it played?"

"Easily enough," answered George; "it is just like Touch, except that it is played among trees or stacks, where you can hide, and the 'Old man' carries a whip. If he can succeed in hitting any one, that one takes the whip, and becomes 'Old man.' Come along; it is capital fun. Seymour is 'Old man,' and here he comes round that stack, so take care."

Tom found that it was a much more amusing game than he had thought, and played at it right heartily.

Once, though, he was rather discomfited; for while he was looking out for George, who was "Old man," in one direction, he came round by the opposite side, and inflicted so unexpected a blow on little Tom, that he

jumped round with a scream, and began to rub himself dolefully. However, the whip was delivered over to him, and in the excitement of running after the others, he soon forgot the smart, and in a day or two he had learned not to mind a little pain.

This was one lesson learned from his early school experience ; for he had been rather too apt to cry when hurt, and sometimes when the hurt was only imaginary. But at school he found that he only earned ridicule, instead of compassion, by mourning over a bruised shin, or a scratched hand, and so he speedily ceased to care about them at all.

When the school-bell rang, the boys returned ; and Tom took his place with them for the first time.

We are not going to give a history of his school hours, but only of his play ; and therefore we will only say that after he had begun to work with the regular school discipline, Tom. White got on very well, and satisfied both his master and his parents.

As Mr. White was obliged to leave Dr. Benson's house in the evening, he asked if he might take out Tom for a walk, in order to have a little conversation with him before he left England for so long a time. Dr. Benson readily gave permission, and the two strolled

away over the fields, and into a pleasant wood, where they sat down.

Here Mr. White took the opportunity of giving his little boy some useful advice respecting his residence with Dr. Benson, and after a time returned with him to the house.

Mr. White sought for the Doctor through the house, but not finding him, went to the boys, who were all congregated together on the lawn, apparently intent upon some object.

"Can any of you tell me where Dr. Benson is?" said Mr. White.

"Here he is, Sir!" said several voices; and as some of the boys moved aside, Dr. Benson was seen sitting on a low stool, holding something in his hand.

"I could not see you," said Mr. White, "and I wanted to speak to you before I left Kingston. You seem quite smothered with boys."

"Yes," replied the Doctor; "they have found an old stick full of burrows, with little creatures in them, and brought it to me for explanation. They are always finding something, and they have by degrees got together quite a little museum, which is better than all the 'Dialogues' or 'Conversations' in the world. It is

very comprehensive, and contains art, science, and nature, although it does not occupy very much space. Now, boys, I have told you the chief point in that piece of wood, so go and put it in the museum."

In a very short time Mr. White had taken his departure. Tom bore up pretty well until he saw the carriage rounding a corner, and his father waving his hand in farewell ; but when he lost sight of the carriage, the poor boy felt alone in the world, and was for a time very miserable.

However, the return of the boys, some of whom he had not seen before, from their museum, roused him from his grief, and he soon accepted the offer of James and George to help him in arranging his desk and books in the schoolroom, and showing him the usual course of lessons. This task employed him for an hour or more, after which he set heartily to work to learn his lessons for the next day. When he had with some labour finished his lessons, for he was not as yet accustomed to learn quickly, it was time for bed, whither he retired—launched fairly on the tide of school life.

CHAPTER III.

TOM GAINS A CHARACTER AT SCHOOL — DR. BENSON'S TEACHING —
"WARNING" — THE GAME EXPLAINED — "WHIP-TOP" — DIFFERENT SIZED TOPS — THE "GRANDFATHER" TOP — "CONQUEROR" — "RACING" — HOW TO USE THE WHIP — SPINNING THE "GRANDFATHER" — THE WHIP — "PEG-TOP" — HOW TO WIND UP AND SPIN A TOP — "PEG IN THE RING" — HOW TO DRAW A CHALK CIRCLE ON THE GROUND — RULES OF THE GAME — TOM LOSES HIS TOP.

THE first two or three days of school are always embarrassing to a boy, and were particularly so to little Tom, as he had not been accustomed to boy's society and the noise and bustle around him rather bewildered him. But after a week or so, he began to fall in with the customs of the school, and in a fortnight felt as much at home as if he had lived at Kingston all his life.

He certainly made several mistakes at first, and was rather ridiculed by the boys, in consequence ; but he soon learned that the best way to stop ridicule is to join in the laugh, and not to be offended. So then the rest of the boys pronounced him a good-tempered fellow ; and from that time he got on well.

Dr. Benson, too, was very kind to all the boys, and always ready to give them information on subjects that many masters do not trouble themselves to teach ; and so the boys had no scruple in asking him about any object that came across them. But he always made them examine for themselves ; and, indeed, that was the principle which he followed even in the course of teaching.

One day, for example, Seymour came up to the Doctor, holding between his hands some winged creature, and asked for an account of it.

"Certainly, Seymour," said he ; "there is a box on the shelf, put the creature into it, and bring it to me." This was done. "Now," said Dr. Benson, "how many wings has this creature ?"

"Two, I think," answered Seymour.

"No ; four," said little Price, who was standing by.

"Are you quite certain ?" asked the Doctor.

"Nearly, Sir," said both boys at once.

"Did you count them ?" asked Dr. Benson.

"No, Sir," said they.

"Then get away, and look for yourselves, before you bring the creature to me. Do you think I am going to save you the trouble of using your eyes and

your brains? No, no, young gentlemen; if you come to a carpenter to learn to make boxes, do you think that he would make all the boxes for you? No, he would show you how to make them; but no more. Now, just gather all the information that you can about this creature, and *then* bring it me.”

What with work and what with play, the time passed quickly enough with Tom White; and he improved rapidly both in mind and body.

A week or two after his arrival, the boys became rather tired of “Touch,” and changed their game for “Warning.”

“Now,” said James to him, “as you do not know the rules of the game, I must just tell you before we begin.”

“First, one boy, we will say George, goes out from among the others, and draws a line on the ground at one end of the field. This line he calls his bounds, and while he is there, no one can meddle with him. He then clasps his hands before him, calls out ‘Warning’ three times, and runs after us, trying to touch us. He may only touch us with his closed hands.”

“Suppose he unclasps his hands,” asked Tom.

“Why, that is just the fun of the game. If he does

so, or if we can pull them apart, he has to run back into bounds as fast as he can ; and if any of us can catch him, we jump on his back, and he is obliged to carry us past the line."

"But if he does touch you," said Tom.

"In that case, both of us have to run into bounds with the others after us. Then we hold each other by the hand, call out 'Warning,' and chase the other boys until they can make us loosen our grasp, or until either he or I touch one of them with the hand that is at liberty. Then all three hold hands and sally out again. And so we go on until we have caught all but one."

"Come, we are waiting for you," shouted the boys ; and James, as being the best runner, volunteered to be the first "Warning," or "Cock," as he is sometimes named, the other players being called "Chickens." He then clasped his hands, called out "Warning ! Warning ! Warning !" and sprang so suddenly upon the boys, that he nearly touched one of them before they had time to separate. James was a very swift runner, and could turn sharply when at speed, and so after a smart chase he touched Williams, one of the day-boys. Away they both started for bounds, all the players pursuing them like wolves chasing their prey. James, however, by twist-

ing and turning, succeeded in getting home, as it is called, without a rider ; but Williams, while trying to escape from two boys who were running after him, was caught by George, and had to carry him into bounds.

Once in bounds, they could not be touched ; and so they waited for a few minutes to recover breath, and then, holding each other by the hand, started off.

They had no easy task now ; for it often happened that just as James was stretching out his hand on one side to touch a boy, he was dragged back by Williams, who thought to touch a player on the other side. At last, they both dragged in different directions at the same time, and lost their hold of each other's hands. They were instantly surrounded and captured, so that even James had to carry a rider. But it is always permitted to shake off the rider if possible, after he is once seated, and James, after prancing and jumping in vain to unseat his brother, who held so tight with his knees that he could not be stirred, made a rush forward, halted abruptly, and then suddenly stooped towards the ground, whereupon George toppled over his head, and measured his length on the grass.

One by one the players were caught, and the line

extended ; but George could not be captured, in spite of all their snares.

Once they hemmed him into a corner, and Tom thought that escape was impossible. But just as the two outside boys were closing in, he made a sudden rush at the centre of the line, broke through it before he could be touched, and then jumping on Seymour's back, enjoyed a ride into bounds.

He had several times succeeded in breaking the line, by coming on them quietly behind, while their attention was engaged, and jerking the hands of the centre boys asunder, by a sudden pluck at their wrists. Once he saved Tom from capture by thus breaking the line just as the outermost boy's hand was on Tom's shoulder.

"How do you like that game?" asked James of Tom, after they had played until they were quite tired.

"Very much indeed," answered Tom ; "but why did you come and join us after Williams and Seymour had been caught ? Ought you not to have taken their hands as you did before ?"

"No," said James ; "when two players have been touched, the one who volunteered as the 'Cock' is

allowed to come and join the ‘Chickens,’ as a reward for doing the hard work at first.”

“Is that it?” replied Tom; “I hope that we shall have another game to-morrow.”

But when the morrow came, the blue sky was over-spread with clouds, and before breakfast was over, the rain began to fall steadily.

“What *shall* we do this wet morning?” said Tom to his schoolfellows; “we cannot play out in the fields.”

“Certainly not,” said George; “we shall go into the barn, and we shall find plenty of amusement there.”

Tom rather doubted that any kind of amusements could be found in a barn; and as it was a dull wet morning in the beginning of April, he felt cold and discontented.

“You look cold,” said James, noticing his shivering walk. “Never mind, you will be warm enough in a few minutes; for we have just brought out our whip-tops, and have been making some good strong whips.”

“I think I can whip a top,” said Tom; “for I had one at home.”

“Very good,” replied James; “so much the better; for there is plenty of whipping wanted for our top.”

By this time they had reached the barn, a large

building with a smooth oak floor in the centre, and spaces at each side for the reception of various beams and poles and tools. It might be used as a barn, but was mostly considered as a playground for the boys on wet days.

"Here are the tops," said James, throwing three or four large whip-tops and their whips on the floor.

"What enormous tops!" cried Tom; "and what heavy whips; I don't think that I can spin one of them. My own top is not a quarter of the size of them, and my whip was only made of a strip of list."

"You will soon learn," said James; "but these are our baby tops; wait till I bring out the grandfather, and then you *will* see a top."

After moving some tools, he cried out—"Now, White, here's the 'grandfather!'" and lifting in both hands a heavy wooden mass, he let it fall on the floor with a thump that made all the other tops spring an inch into the air.

"Do you call that a top?" asked Tom, quite astounded; "it looks as if it were a piece of a tree trunk."

"That is exactly what it is," responded James, "and it has been smoothed off in a turning lathe, and tapered

to a point at one end, where you see we have driven a great brass-headed nail as a peg for it to spin on. It began to split, though, after we used it for a few weeks ; so Edward took it to the blacksmith, and he put these two iron rings round it, so now it is as strong as can be."

"How *can* you spin such a heavy thing?" said Tom, vainly trying to lift it from the ground.

"Well," said James, "it takes two of us to make it spin at all, and four to make it spin properly ; but when it *does* spin, it does not tumble down in a hurry. You shall see it presently, but now we are going to have a game of 'Conqueror.' If the weather were fine, we would have some top-races ; but if we were to try it here, we should hurt each other with our whips. However, when the ground is dry, we will try a few games at racing our tops ; that is, we draw a chalk line, start the tops at the same time, and try who can drive his top to a goal first. But now we must content ourselves with 'Conqueror.'"

"How do you play at 'Conqueror?'" asked Tom.

"You will see in a minute," said James ; "take one of the tops and a whip, and try to make it spin, on that side of the barn ; but you must not come in the middle,

for our tops are going to fight there, and you might get a blow instead of the top."

Tom then took up the top pointed out to him, and tried very hard to make it spin properly, but he could not well manage the whip, and struck his legs so often instead of the top, that he ceased for a while, and watched James and Williams, who were playing at "Conqueror."

The object of this game was simply for each player to knock down the opponent's top by driving his own against it. In this game great skill is required to give the tops the proper direction, and to be careful not to let them touch the enemy unless they are spinning strongly. Tom noticed that James Benson always came off victorious, and called out to him to ask how he managed it.

"Look for yourself," answered James, after his father's habit. So Tom did look, and saw, that whenever James intended an attack on his adversary's top, he made the whip curl round his own top with a peculiar slapping sound, and by the blow, lifted the top fairly off the ground, making it spring upon that of his adversary, which it drove away to some distance; while, by a well aimed cut with the whip, he recovered his own top, and prevented it from falling.

After a few of these encounters, James turned to Tom White, and told him to bring the top into the middle of the floor, and that he would set it up.

So after he had made it spin rapidly, he told Tom to take the whip and go on with it.

But the boy had hardly made the first blow before James cried—

“Stop ! stop ! *that* is not the way to whip a top. If you lift your arm over your head in that fashion, you will be hitting every one near you, besides running a chance of striking your own head.”

“I *did* get the last on my face, just now,” answered Tom ; “and so I left off.”

“The best thing you could do,” replied James. “Now, just see how I hold the whip, and strike : my hand never rises above my shoulder, and I strike with my wrist, not with my whole arm, as you were doing. You don’t want the whip to go a long way through the air ; but you want it to come sharp and smart upon the top, drawing it towards you as you give each blow.”

Here James again set up the top, and Tom tried his best to keep it spinning ; but it gradually sank, and at last fell, in spite of a blow aimed at it by Tom, which took effect on his own legs.

"There!" cried George, who had been an amused spectator; "only hit your top as hard as you hit your legs, and it will spin beautifully. Don't cry now; it was not very much, and tears won't make it better. If you want to see a top spin, now is your time to learn, for James and I are going to set up the 'grandfather,' and Seymour and Williams are going to join us when he spins respectably."

So saying, he brought the huge top into the middle of the floor, tucked his whip under his left arm, and looked up to see that James was opposite him, whip in hand. After turning the top backwards and forwards once or twice, he gave it a sharp twirl, which just set it turning, sprang to his feet, and delivered a smart blow, which was immediately followed by another from James. Blow after blow fell on the sides of the top, both players keeping time with each other, until it was spinning steadily.

"Now, Seymour," cried James, "mark time, and come in. One, two,—one, two,—one, two, three!" and as the word "three" issued from his lips, down came Seymour's whip on the top. When they were fairly settled to the work, they gradually made room for Williams, who was waiting, and counting aloud.

The four strokes now fell almost with the regularity of a steam engine, and under their power the "grandfather" spun so rapidly that it seemed to be motionless, as if nailed to the floor ; and the sport was continued until the arms of the four boys were quite tired, and they were forced to rest.

"Now, White," said George, "hit away at the grandfather while he is spinning so beautifully, and try if you can keep him going until we are ready for him again."

So Tom did his best ; and as the great top was an easier mark than the small one on which he had been practising, he got on better, and planted two or three very good blows. Taking courage from his success, when the four boys returned to the grandfather, he took his top into the corner, and after a short time succeeded in making it spin without hitting his own legs or head.

The whip, however, perplexed him, and he asked George how it was made, for he had never seen such a whip before.

"It is made of eel-skin," answered George ; "we get the fresh skin of an eel, or if it is dry we soak it in water to make it supple. We then push the end of the handle into the skin, and tie it firmly with string."

As the rain continued for several days, the barn was the only place of recreation for the boys, and therefore whip-tops were in constant use.

However, boys do not long hold to one sport, and demand variety. This object was attained by the sudden introduction of peg-tops, a whole colony of which seemed to have sprung into being in the course of a morning.

Tom was more puzzled with the peg-tops than he had been with the whipping-tops, and his exhibition of spinning was met with such contempt by the boys, that he was half disposed to put away top and string for good.

In fact, he had been rather boasting to his companions of the excellent way in which he could spin a top, and having one in his box, he ran off to fetch it. After winding it up, he proceeded to spin it by the underhand mode. This is the easiest way to make a top spin, but it is very awkward, and is managed by holding the top with its peg upwards, throwing it forwards nearly level with the ground, and drawing the string back smartly: but the top does not spin strongly, and all top-players despise the underhand-spinning, heartily.

"Look at me," said George, "and first learn how to wind up your top properly ; for you will never make it spin strongly if it is wound so loosely as yours was just now. Take the top in your left hand, and hold the end of the string tightly against its side with your thumb ; now wind the string firmly round the *peg*, and cover about half of it with string. That is right. Now wind away regularly until you have covered the top about two-thirds with the string ; now put the button between the second and third fingers of your right hand—"

"What button ?" said Tom ; "I have no button."

"No wonder you cannot spin your top, then !" answered James ; "tie this button on the loose end of the string ; now put it between your fingers, as you see mine ; draw up the string tight, hold the top peg downwards, and throw it as you see me do. There, see how it spins, and listen how it hums !"

So Tom followed these directions as closely as he could, threw down his top as he had seen James do, but, to his great mortification, the top flew off the string, shot along the floor, and was only stopped by the opposite wall.

"Never mind that," said James, desirous of cheering

him ; " tops always behave so until you know how to manage them, and run away like wild horses. You will do better after you have tried once or twice more ; and when you can make your top spin, I will teach you how to play at ' Peg in the Ring. ' "

Tom practised with much perseverance, in spite of several misfortunes. Once, for example, the top did not leave the string, but jumped back again from the floor, and came on Tom's head with a thump that brought the tears into his eyes ; and at first it either would not spin at all, or it spun lying on its side, or sometimes with its peg in the air. At last, however, he mastered the principle, and then reminded James of his promise to show him how to play at " Peg in the Ring. "

" I must say that you have earned your reward, " said James, " and you have been very persevering ; so get a fresh piece of good whipcord, for yours is nearly worn out, and while you are putting on the button, I will make a ring. "

James then took a piece of chalk, pressed it against the ground, and by turning round on one heel, he drew a very tolerable circle, about a yard across ; he then stepped upon the edge of this circle, and by walking

round it, and still pressing the chalk on the ground, he drew a much larger circle round that which he had first made.

By this time Tom had tied the button on his string and was winding up his top, as were the other boys who had collected round James while he was making the double ring.

"Now, Knight," said James to one of the day boys, "give the first peg." So Knight threw his top into the inner ring, while the boys, standing outside the outer ring, tried to strike it with their own tops. Presently it fell on its side, and rolled out of the inner ring, whereupon its owner took it up, and began to peg at those which still remained within the ring.

"I do not quite understand," said Tom ; "why did Knight take up his top when it fell down, and George leave his in the ring, and use another?"

"Because it is a rule, that unless the top rolls out of the ring, or comes out while spinning, it must lie there as a mark for the others to peg at. Long-pegged tops are the best for this game, because they are always running about while spinning, and when they fall, they roll to some distance. Look, George has hit his own dead top, as we call those that lie in the ring, and has

knocked it outside the chalk line ; now he may take it up, and use it again."

"May not we stand inside the outer ring to throw our tops?" asked Tom.

"By no means," said James ; "you may stand as far outside as you like, but you must not touch it even with a toe ; if you do, your top is dead, and you must put it in the ring."

"But what shall I do while it lies there?" said Tom.

"Take another, to be sure," said James ; "and try to get your own out of the way before it is hurt by the other tops. Now look, here is my favourite top ; I call it the Iron Duke, because it beats all the others. You see, it is made of *lignum-vitæ*, is very heavy, and has a long, sharp steel peg ; see how he comes down upon them."

So saying, James raised his arm, and the top was hurled with great force among those in the ring.

"Oh!" cried Tom in amazement, "you have split George's top right in two! How could you do it?"

"That is about the twenty-fifth," said James, quietly ; "George, hand over the peg."

"Why do you want the peg?" asked Tom, who was lost in astonishment at these proceedings.

"It is the same thing as carrying off the colours of the enemy," replied James. "I have a whole bundle of pegs in my box that the Iron Duke has won."

"What an odd shape the top is!" observed Tom, who had been handling it curiously for some time.

"Yes," replied James; "I had it made after my own pattern. You see that instead of having a flat head, like the other tops, it rises almost to a point, and is nicely rounded. So if it is in the ring, and another top strikes it, the enemy's peg only slips down the side, and cannot hurt it. Even Edward cannot split it, although he made these little grooves, and knocked it over. Oh, it's a jolly top! No one can hurt it, and it splits all the others. Moreover, it has such a long peg, and is so springy that I can make it do almost anything. See how I will fetch my own dead top out."

With these words he threw the top into the ring. It struck the ground just beyond the dead top, and drove it out of the ring. At the same time it seemed to make a kind of jump, and leaped fairly over the chalk mark, not having been inside the ring for more than a second.

"How is that done?" asked Tom.

"It is not very easy," replied James, "but I think that I can show you, and will do it again. See, I don't

peg very hard downwards, because I do not want to split the top at which I aim ; but to knock it out of the ring. But I throw it away from me, as it were, and then draw back the string smartly, so that my arm goes round in a circular sweep. So the top only jumps into the ring and out again, and no one has time to aim at it. If you want to learn the stroke, just practise it by yourself, or you will be hitting everybody with the top, instead of making it spin."

However, Tom thought that he had observed James so well that he could not fail, and so did his best to produce the same effect. But the top only came to the ground, and did not spin at all. Tom picked it up and was beginning to wind, when George called out, "That's a dead top ! put it in the ring."

"But," said Tom, "it rolled out of the ring."

"No matter," answered George ; "it did not spin ; and tops that don't spin are counted dead. In with it, for I want to have a peg at it."

So poor Tom had to put his top in the ring, and the next moment down came George's top just by it, but did not hit it. Tom began to breathe freely ; but alas ! there was a whizz of string, a black mass shot through the air, a sharp blow and a crack followed, and there

lay poor Tom's top in two pieces, with the Iron Duke spinning tranquilly between them."

"What a shame!" cried Tom; "and it's the only top I have."

"Well, I think it *is* rather a shame," answered James; "but it was such a beautiful mark. Where's the peg? Never mind your top; I have half-a-dozen better, and you may take either of them; but you had better get three or four for yourself. And unless you have one like the Iron Duke, which nothing hurts, you had better buy half-a-dozen cheap tops, for you are allowed to exchange the top that died for any other, so that you only leave a top in the ring. Halfpenny tops are just as good to be split as sixpenny ones, and much cheaper."

CHAPTER IV.

"TOUCH WOOD"—TOM'S STRATAGEM—"PRISONERS' BASE"—SETTING THE PRISONS AND BASES—DESCRIPTION OF THE GAME—VARIOUS MODES OF RESCUING PRISONERS—A SHARP STRUGGLE—MAKING A "CHAIN"—A POINT OF GENERALSHIP—THE GAME WON—DR. BENSON'S PRIZE—A FEW SHORT RULES.

WHEN the ruin-clouds departed, and the ground had become sufficiently dry for open-air exercise, the boys were glad to go back to their out-door games. On the first morning that the weather cleared up, there was but little time, so they had no opportunity of getting up an organised game, and were wasting their short time in deciding on the game which they were to play.

At last one of them suggested "Touch wood," and this proposition was at once accepted.

"What is 'Touch wood?'" said Tom.

"Much the same as 'Touch,' except that while you are touching wood, you are safe. It is a good game to play when we have not much time, and here you see

the trees stand very conveniently for us. Now go and stand with your hand on that tree ; I shall stand at this, and George will go out to the middle. We shall run about and change places ; and if George can touch any of us before we can put our hands on some wooden object, the boy touched has to go out, and George takes his place."

The boys accordingly began to play with much spirit. It was, however, observed that Tom was not exerting himself very much, and so the boy who was out soon pounced on him and touched him.

Tom, however, declined to go out, on the plea that he was touching wood, at the same time drawing his hand out of his pocket, and in his hand a peg-top, which was made of box-wood. There was rather a dispute between the two ; and James was called upon to decide.

"That is very clever, White," observed he, "and the idea does you credit ; but it is against rules. The wood which you touch must be immovable. And, besides, it is dangerous to carry hard objects in your pocket when you are running, especially such things as tops which have pegs and might wound you. However, you may have another chance this time, as you did not know the rules of the game."

This decision pleased both parties, and the game was resumed.

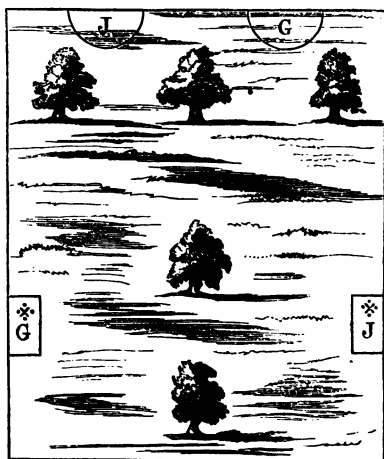
"Now that you know how to run better than you did when you first came here," said James, "we will have some real good games at 'Prisoners' Base.' We have a half holiday this afternoon, and shall have plenty of time. The day boys are going to stay with us on purpose, and the grass is in capital order."

Accordingly, the whole party went off to the playing-field, and as they were going James explained the game for the benefit of Tom and Price, and one or two of the day boys who were not quite certain about it.

"Sometimes it is called Prison Bars," said he, "because of the two bounds or bars ; but I like the word 'Prisoners' Base' better. We shall be in two parties : George will be captain of one, and I of the other ; and we shall make our bounds in this way. Look, here is a kind of plan, or a map of the field, and the trees. Now, here are two semicircles, and these are the homes. While we are at home we cannot be touched.

"My home I mark with a J, and George's with a G. Opposite the homes are the prisons, these two oblong figures, and I mark mine with J*, and George's with G*. So that for me to reach my prison, I have

to cross George's home, and the contrary. If my party catch any of George's side, they have to go to his



prison ; and if any of my side are caught, they have to go to mine, and stay there until we can rescue them by touching them before we can be touched by any of the opposite party. When we get to the field and have marked our homes and prisons, I will tell you more."

The boys then made the prisons and the homes, by driving pegs into the ground, and stretching string from peg to peg. This is driven close to the ground, and so there is no risk of tripping up the players.

These preliminaries arranged, the two captains drew lots for first choice of players. George was successful, and chose Williams, James chose Jackson, and so they chose alternately until they were all on one side or the other.

The sides when completed stood thus, showing the ages of the boys engaged.

	Age		Age
James	15	George	13
Jackson	13	Williams	14
Knight	13	Seymour	11
Miller	12	Shepherd	12
Wilson	10	Masterman	11
Tom	10	Price	9

“Now,” said James, collecting his party at his home, “you must do as I tell you, or we shall be beaten, for George is a capital player. If you stir out of home, you can be touched by any one of the opposite party, and then you will have to go to prison. So your business is to run after those whom I tell you to follow, and to touch them if you can. You must make haste about it, too, for George will send some one after you to try to touch you before you catch the other. I shall send some one after him, and so we go on.”

In the meanwhile, George was giving similar instruc-

tions to his own party, so that in a few minutes all was ready.

As George had the first choice of players, he was bound to send forth the first player as a challenge, and so ordered Price to run out at least as far as the prisons, and then to come back again, if he could, without being touched.

"Now, White," said James, "run after Price, and touch him if you can ; and remember that you must touch no one except him."

Away went Price, and away went Tom after him. George immediately sent one of his own players after Tom, but just too late, for he succeeded in touching Price just before the hands of his pursuer were upon him. He then ran back to bounds as fast as he could, while Price was going to prison, and received much praise for his exertions.

"You need not have come so fast back," said James. "After you have touched any one, you cannot be touched yourself until you have entered bounds again ; so next time, unless I call you, come home quietly and save your breath."

Scarcely had Price reached his prison, when George sent Seymour to rescue him. Away went the boy with

a rush, straight for the prison, but was intercepted by Miller, who chased him so closely, that he was obliged to leave Price in prison, and look to his own safety.

George, seeing that the attention of the opposite party was directed towards the struggle between Seymour and Miller, directed Shepherd to put his hands in his pockets, and saunter quietly towards the prison, as if he were not playing at all.

Shepherd did as ordered, and had gained nearly half the distance before James discovered the stratagem. He instantly started off to touch Shepherd, but it was too late, for the boy, as soon as he saw himself detected, sprang forward and released the prisoner.

George then ran out in hopes of touching James, but Jackson started out to defend his leader, and George went back again, while James returned to his own home.

Miller and Seymour were still in chase, and both being fatigued, George sent out Masterman to touch Miller. He finding himself hard pressed, gave up his chase, and Seymour took the opportunity of returning home, while Miller contrived to get behind a tree, and slipping round on one side just as Masterman came at the other, he escaped also, and Masterman thought that he himself had better get back too.

The game was now equal again, every one being at home. It was now the turn of James to send out a challenge. Accordingly, he told Tom to go out.

"How far?" said Tom.

"You must go at least as far as George's prison, or it is not a fair challenge. You may then come back, or go on according to circumstances."

Away went Tom, and after him went Price. They were tolerably equal runners, and so Tom was obliged to run well past the prison. Wilson then went after Price. Masterman was sent after Wilson, and Knight after Masterman. The chase was now quite animated, and the players were encouraged by shouts and directions from their leaders.

Suddenly, Tom's foot slipped, and before he could recover himself, Price had touched him.

Wilson had made sure of touching so small a boy as Price; but as Price was now safe, he turned to go back, forgetting that there was some one after him. Just as he checked himself, Masterman's hand came on his arm, and he too had to go to prison. Knight ran back again.

"This won't do," said James to his party. "Here are White and Wilson in prison; Jackson, you are the best runner; get out Wilson, I don't care so much about

White. Now, I shall pretend to go out, and that will bring out one or two of George's side—take the opportunity, and make a dash before they can recover themselves."

Accordingly, James started off full speed for some ten or twelve yards; and as he imagined, Williams started after him. Back jumped James; and as he did so, Jackson shot past him, and freed Wilson.

"Take me too," cried Tom, who did not at all like his imprisonment.

"One at a time," said Jackson; "we'll fetch you presently."

But poor Tom had a much longer course of imprisonment to undergo; for Miller, who came to release him, was caught, and had to go to prison also, and so had Knight.

"Make a chain!" called James.

So Knight took a hand of Miller, who gave his other hand to Tom.

"Now, White," said Miller, "put one of your feet inside the prison line, and step out as far as you can with the other."

Miller then stepped as far as he could from Tom, and Knight did the same with regard to Miller, holding out

his free hand in the direction of his home. This is allowable ; for it is only necessary that some portion of a prisoner should be within the prison, and as long as they hold hands, a number of prisoners may thus form a line, and so shorten the distance.

The opposite party now redoubled their watchfulness, and many were the feints and advances on both sides.

"I'll tell you what we must do," said James. "They are too strong for us just now ; and if we don't get both Miller and Knight, we shall soon lose. So we must make up our mind to lose Wilson, who cannot run very fast ; but we'll secure the two others. I shall make another feint, and then all three of us will rush off in a body, and Wilson must keep between us and the enemy. Wait for the word, and then run as if the bull were after you."

He then watched his opportunity, and when he saw a good opening, he cried, "Off!" and away they ran.

George's party were for the moment astonished, but he, Williams, and Seymour, started after the adventurous three. Wilson was captured by George ; but as he was between them and the prisoners, James and Jackson succeeded in reaching their imprisoned friends in safety.

The game proceeded with varying success, until James, having fallen a victim to his own impetuosity when attempting by a bold rush to rescue Jackson, who was in prison, the rest of the party were disheartened, and were easily outmanœuvred.

The next game was won by James, so that there now remained the test game, which was to decide the victors of the day. The boys acted with great wariness and activity; and as by this time they had become accustomed to their adversaries' style of play, they were not so easily deceived by stratagem as before.

So carefully was the game conducted, and so well were the parties matched, that it was difficult for any one to decide to which of them victory would incline.

At the midst of this last game, Dr. Benson entered the field, and after ascertaining the different sides, and the swiftness of the various players, sat down under the tree that stood between the two homes. His presence gave a greater zest to the sport, and each boy exerted himself to the utmost.

It so happened, that after a rapid series of challenges, imprisonments, and rescues, every player was in prison, with the exception of the two captains, who both ran

eagerly into the homes in order to rush out and rescue a friend before the other got home. But they both reached their bounds at the same moment, and giving up for the time the attempted rescue, they began to laugh, and sat down to recover breath.

While they were still sitting, the imprisoned players were employing in forming themselves into two chains, and stretching as far as they could towards the leader who they hoped would rescue them.

Now came a curious point in the game. If, for example, James ran out to release a player, George might either do the same, or he might chase James. Now, if he ran after James, he could not release one of his own side in case of failure; and if he went for the release, he could not chase James until he had gone back to bounds. The two boys were equally enough matched; for although James could run faster than George in a level race, his long legs sometimes prevented him from turning or stopping when at full speed, with that agility which George possessed.

"Now, boys," said Dr. Benson, "do your best, for I have brought a prize for the side that wins." With these words the Doctor produced from his pocket a paper parcel, and on opening it, he displayed to the boys

a British flag, about a yard square, which fluttered gloriously in the breeze.

"There!" said he; "we will fasten this on a staff, and the party that conquers shall carry it off and keep it until the others can win it from them."

Whereupon the boys began to cheer and shout, and many were the appeals to the rival champions to win the game and earn the flag.

After several false starts by both boys, and after many stratagems had been employed and frustrated, James trusted to his speed, and boldly dashed away to his prison. But George was just too quick for him, and before he could reach the outstretched hand of Jackson, who was at the end of the chain, shot past him, and as he passed, touched him on the arm.

So George and his side set up a loud cheer, and carried off the flag in triumph.

"How do you like 'Prisoners' Base?'" asked James of Tom, as they went homewards.

"I like the game very much," replied Tom; "but I don't at all like being a prisoner, and staying there while all the others are running about."

"Perhaps not," said James; "but that is the very thing that makes you avoid being touched. If it were

pleasant to be in prison, we should not make such exertions to avoid it. And, once or twice, it was entirely your own fault in hesitating, so that you were caught before you had made up your mind. There is no time left for hesitation in this game."

"I was thinking about the rules," said Tom ; "for I was not sure of them, and so I stopped to think. I wish, James, that you would write them down for me, and I will learn them against our next game, and then perhaps we may get the flag."

"Very well," said James ; "I think it is a good plan, and when we come in I will write them for you."

So after they had settled down for the evening, Tom reminded him of his promise, and brought pen, ink, and paper for him out of his own desk.

James accordingly sat down, and wrote the following rules :—

"Each party has one home and one prison, the prison being on the side opposite to the home.

"Only one player can be touched at a time, and the player who touched him is safe until he has reached home.

"A player thus touched is forced to go to prison,

whence he can be released only by being touched by a player of his own side.

“No player can touch one of the opposite party who started from home after himself.

“When all the players of one side are imprisoned, the game is won by the opposite party.

“Only one prisoner can be released at a time, and both the prisoner and his rescuer may return home without being liable to capture.”

“There,” said James, “you will not require more than that to help you ; and if you make yourself familiar with these few rules, you will do well enough.”

CHAPTER V.

STILTS—HOW TO MOUNT THEM—TOM'S FAILURE—LEARNING TO WALK—"TRAP-BALL"—DESCRIPTION OF THE GAME AND RULES—HOW TO MAKE A TRAP OUT OF A PIECE OF STICK—THE "SPLENT" AND HOW TO USE IT—"DOG-STICKS"—"ROUNDERS"—PLAN OF THE FIELD AND DESCRIPTION OF THE GAME—RULES—GAINING THE "ROUNDERS"—JACKSON'S DETERMINED CONDUCT—VARIOUS STRATAGEMS DESCRIBED.

"WHAT *are* you carrying on your shoulders?" asked Tom White, one morning, as he saw several of the boys approaching, laden with bundles of wooden poles.

"These are stilts," answered they; "we have not used them this year, but the road is so muddy that we asked Dr. Benson to let us have them. We have an extra pair, which you can use; they belonged to William Palmer, who was a capital walker on stilts, and could hop down a flight of stairs on one stilt, holding the other in his hand."

"Can you walk on those things?" said Tom, contemplating with dismay the two poles with their wooden steps, that were laid at his feet.

"Look here!" was the answer.

Whereupon the boys placing the ends of the stilts under their arms, so that the butt ends projected forward, something like an officer's sword when he carries it under his arm, ran a few steps forward, placed the butt of the stilts on the ground, and leapt into the footstep that was fastened on each stilt. Thus mounted, they began marching about with huge strides, like so many storks or herons.

"I can never get on the stilts that way," said Tom.

"Then jump up on this stool," said George, who was striding about quite at his ease, "and then you will get on them easily enough."

So Tom got on the stool, put his right foot into the step of the right stilt, but could not summon up sufficient courage to leave his safe standing on the stool, and commit himself to the precarious footing of the stilt.

"Up with you!" cried George; "what are you hesitating about?"

"I can't do it," said poor Tom; "the stilts are so long, and they shake so."

"You mean that *you* shake so," retorted George, jumping down from his own stilts.

"Now, I'll hold them steady while you get up."

So Tom cautiously put his feet on the steps, and being encouraged by George, stood there, but very timidly.

"Now walk about," said George. "Lift the stilt from the ground with your hand, and carry your foot with it."

The moment that George loosed his hold of the stilts, Tom was about to step back on the stool. George, however, was too quick for him, and kicked away the stool, leaving poor Tom suspended, as it seemed to himself, in mid-air. He felt himself going, took a few hasty steps, missed his footing, and down he came."

"Come here, and I'll pick you up," said George, who was again mounted on his own stilts. "If you hold your stilts like a washerwoman holding her umbrella, of course you will tumble down. Look, this is the way to hold stilts."

And George paced backward and forward in front of Tom, as he is here exhibited.

"It looks easy enough," said Tom.



"It is easy," replied George; "and after you try once or twice more, you will find it as easy as we do. We all had to learn, and we all tumbled down a little at first: but you will not be hurt when you do slip, for you see that the foot is not fastened to the stilt; so if you find yourself going, just loose your hands, and you will come down on your feet—so," said George, coming down in the way described.

Tom took courage, and acting on George's advice, brought his stool to the wall, and leant with his back against the wall while he got on the stilts. Being then sure of not falling backwards, he soon acquired sufficient confidence, and in half-an-hour could walk across the playground, although rather awkwardly. In a day or two he could use his stilts with perfect ease, and found them exceedingly useful in passing over the muddy spots always found in wet weather between the house and the playground or the barn.

"Here's a beautiful afternoon," said Dr. Benson, one day; "and as you have been all very industrious lately, you shall have a half-holiday, to go and play at trap-ball."

The boys were delighted at this permission, and in a few minutes were on their way to the field, carrying

with them the trap, the bat, and one or two balls, in case of accidents.

When they arrived there, James put down the trap, and walking about twenty paces in front of it, planted two long sticks in the ground, about thirty yards apart.

"Now," said George, "you know that you are to hit the trigger of the trap with the bat; and when the ball jumps into the air, you are to strike it as far as you can. If you knock it outside those sticks, or not so far as the sticks, or if you strike at the ball twice without hitting it, you are out, and give up the bat to some one else."

"I knew about the striking of the ball," said Tom, "but I never saw boundary sticks used before. How do you count, and how do you know who wins?"

"I was going to tell you," said George; "this time we shall play each for himself, because the day-boys have gone home, and we are not enough to make sides; so one of us will be *in*, and all the others *out*. Suppose you are *in*, and hit the ball, we try to stop it; and if we can catch it before it touches the ground, out you go; if not, we bowl it at the trap, and when the ball stops, you guess how many bats' length it is from

the trap ; if you guess too many you are out, but if you are within the number, you count as many as you guessed. Each of us has two innings ; and whoever gains most, wins the game."

"But if you hit the trap with the ball, I am out, am I not ?" asked Tom.

"Of course you are," said George ; "but I thought that you knew that rule, so I did not mention it."

"Let me put it down on paper," said Tom, who had been busily writing—

"I am out—

"1. If I strike at the ball twice without hitting it.

"2. If I do not send it between the boundary sticks.

"3. If it is caught before it touches the ground.

"4. If it is bowled back and strikes the trap.

"5. If I call more than the real number of bats' lengths.

"Will that list do ?"

"Yes," said George, "that is quite correct. Now, as you and Price are little fellows, we shall give you three innings each, and move your boundaries nearer the trap ; so take the bat—not in both hands, as you have it, and when we are ready, begin."

So Tom went to the trap, placed the ball in it, and

struck the trigger so hard that the ball flew over his head. Taking warning, he next touched the trigger so gently that the ball only rose an inch or two, and rolled on the ground.

"There! I am out," cried Tom, throwing the bat on the grass.

"No," said James, "you are allowed one extra miss when you first go in, so don't lose this chance; try the trap once or twice."

So the next time Tom succeeded in giving the ball such a stroke that it passed the boundaries, and went over Seymour's head.

Seymour picked it up, and bowled it towards the trap. When the ball rested, Tom looked at the bat, and then at the space between the ball and the trap, measuring it with his eye.

"Three!" he cried. As there were at least six lengths, he was allowed to count the three.

So he picked up the ball, quite pleased at his success, and struck it very hard, but unfortunately it went outside the boundary; Jackson threw it back, and he tried again. This time he was more successful, and sent the ball along the ground until it rested just beyond the boundary.

Price bowled it this time, and Tom added two more to his score.

He was now quite triumphant, and expected to win the game without any difficulty ; but his next ball was driven high into the air, and Seymour, running to the spot where it would fall, caught it, and Tom had to give up his bat to Price.

Poor Price did not make much of his first innings, for he missed the ball at his first stroke, and did not get it so far as the boundary in the two others ; so he had to go out immediately.

James then took the bat, and with his first stroke sent the ball to such a distance, that it was a hard matter for Seymour to send it even as far as the trap ; and hitting it was out of the question.

“ Five ! ” called James.

“ But there were at least twenty lengths,” said Tom, who had been watching.

“ Yes,” replied James, “ but we do not count more than five, however far it may be.”

After a few more balls had been delivered by James, and bowled by George and Seymour, Tom asked to be allowed to bowl. James looked on with a smile as Tom took up the ball, but was surprised

by seeing it roll straight towards the trap, and put him out.

"Well bowled, White!" said George; "much obliged to you for giving me my innings."

George then took his turn at the trap, and was as badly off as James had been. He struck the ball past the bounds, where it was stopped; Tom took it up to bowl, and George laughingly turned the trap round, so as to present its heel to the bowler, a privilege to which the batsman is entitled. The precaution was in this case useless, for Tom bowled him out.

"How wonderfully well you bowl," said James, on seeing his brother lay down the bat; "where did you play before?"

"I have not played much at trap," said Tom; "but we have a bowling-green at home, and we played at bowls almost every day."

The skill that Tom White displayed in bowling, made amends for his want of practice in striking the ball; and when he had acquired a little more precision with the bat, he was considered as a player hardly inferior to George, and quite as formidable as an opponent, even if he could not gain so many for his own score.

When next they went to play, they were delayed at

starting by having mislaid the trap, and would have lost their game altogether if Seymour had not come to the rescue.

"Never mind the trap," said he ; "I was at school in the North, and learned how to make a trap in a minute out of a piece of stick ; and if we can find a bit of wood about six inches in length, I'll make one as we walk along. We never used traps there ; but always the 'splents,' as we called them. Oh, here's a splinter of deal that will just do."

He then produced his pocket-knife, and fashioned the piece of wood into a "splent ;" its form being very like that of the trigger of a common trap, having one end wider than the other, and slightly hollowed to hold the ball.

"But if you hit that ever so hard," objected George, "the ball won't jump."

"Won't it ?" replied Seymour ; "wait until we come to the field, and then you'll see whether it will jump or not."

On their arrival Seymour took the bat, and began to hammer the ground, until he had beaten it into a depression about an inch or so in depth, and sloping gradually. He then laid the "splent" in the hollow,

with the larger end downwards, and placed the ball on it, so that the small end of the "splent" pointed upwards. He then struck it with the bat ; and the ball, of course, rose into the air.

"There," cried he triumphantly, "what do you think of that, George? I'll make the ball jump twenty feet high, if you want. The beauty of the thing is, that you can make the splent throw the ball to any height, and in any direction that you like."

"That's all very well," said Tom White, who saw his best point of play suddenly destroyed ; "but how can you be bowled out when there is such a little thing as that splent to bowl at?"

"Oh, as to that, we did not bowl *at* the splent ; but we tried to bowl *into* a hole that we made just in front of the place where we put the splent ; and if the ball went into the hole and stayed there, it put the player out. That hole, too, was very useful, for it served also for 'Rounders.'"

"You promised to teach us 'Rounders' last year," said James ; "but the weather was so wet that we could not manage it. I think that I know something of it ; but I never saw it played, and should like to learn."

"It is a capital game," said Seymour; "for it keeps so many employed at once; so when we have our next half-holiday, we will get Williams and the other day-boys to stay, and we will have some games. I don't like this bat, though, and for 'Rounders' we must have a dog-stick or two made."

"What in the world is a dog-stick?" asked James. "Is it a stick to beat dogs with?"

"Not exactly; at least, if so, I pity the dogs. It is a stout cudgel, about three feet long, round, and tapering towards the handle end, where there is a knob to keep it firmly in the grasp. Some players have their dog-sticks made of heavy wood, and I have seen a ball driven to a wonderful distance.

"In the North they make the rounder and splent balls very curiously of box-wood, loaded with shot in the middle, and covered with leather, so that they are nearly as hard as pebbles, and pretty well as heavy. It's no joke to stop or catch a box-ball, I can tell you. Let us call at the turner's, as we go home, and tell him to make a couple of dog-sticks."

So they called at the shop, and having given the order, waited to see the sticks made. They looked with great interest at the whirling wood, and the chips that

flew in showers from the chisel. Very soon the dog-stick was shaped out, and the turner proceeded to polish it with sand-paper.

"It looks mighty like a constable's staff, young gentlemen," said he.

"So it does," replied Seymour; "and once when the Chartists were expected in our town, the special constables called at the school and carried away all our dog-sticks, and used them as staves."

"Will that do, master?" asked the man, stopping the lathe.

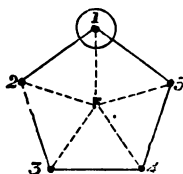
"Not quite," answered Seymour; "make it look pretty by some dark rings; we used to have them so arranged as to know our own dog-sticks."

So the turner again set the wheel going, and pressing an edge of wood against the revolving cudgel, it blackened, smoked, and would have burst into flame if the wood had not been removed. Several of these rings were made, and then Seymour pronounced the dog-stick complete. A second was speedily finished, and the boys walked off with their purchase.

When the next half-holiday came, away went the party for the purpose of learning the game of "Rounders."

"Make a hole in the ground here," said Seymour,

"about six inches deep, and a foot across, while I mark out the bases."



He then marked out four stations, besides that one formed by the hole, so as to make a regular five-sided figure, according to the annexed plan.

The bases or stations were made by driving a split peg into the ground, and inserting a piece of white paper in the slit, so as to make the station conspicuous. These preliminaries arranged, Seymour called the others round him, and gave the following directions.

"You must make two sides now, so we shall be six of a side; and when we have done so, I will tell you what to do."

The sides were then formed, being the same as before recorded when the boys played at "Prisoners' Base." They then drew lots for first innings, and James's side won.

"This is something like trap-ball," said Seymour, "but more amusing, for nearly all the players have something to do, even those whose side is in.

"James goes in first, and he will take the dog-stick and stand at the left side of the hole, which is marked

1. All the rest will stand behind him, out of the way of the players. All my side, except myself, will stand out in the field to stop the ball, as we do in trap-ball, and I shall be feeder, as we call it.

“The feeder has to stand somewhere near the spot marked F; but he need not do so if the batsman wants him nearer; and his business is to toss the ball towards the batsman, so that it may fall into the hole. The batsman strikes at the ball, if it is properly thrown; but he may refuse it, if he chooses. If he misses it twice, he is out.

“If he hits it beyond the hole, he drops the dog-stick and runs to station 2 as fast as he can, or to 3, or in fact all round, if possible. We try to stop the ball, and if we can hit him with it, or lodge it in the hole while he is between two stations, he is out, and has to stand aside. Do you understand that?”

The boys all answered that they understood it perfectly, and Seymour proceeded.

“When James has made his hit, we will suppose that he only gets to station 3. Jackson will then take the dog-stick, and I shall ‘feed’ him. When he hits the ball, away runs James to station 4, or 5, or home if he can, while Jackson follows the same course. So some-

times you have four players at the bases and one at the home."

"That is clear enough," said James ; "but I want to know how we count."

"Every time that a player succeeds in getting home, one is counted towards his side," said Seymour ; "so you see one object of getting round as fast as possible. And when you have reached home, you wait your turn, and then go in again."

"Then I suppose," said James, "when we are all put out, your side comes in?"

"Not quite ; you still have another chance ; but when it comes to the time I will tell you about it."

The boys then distributed themselves about the fields, and the game began. They were rather awkward at it at first, but Seymour forbore to avail himself of many opportunities that were offered for putting out his opponents, and determined to wait until the second innings to show them how to play properly. The game proceeded, boy after boy was hit, or grounded out, until only James and Miller were left.

"Now," said Seymour, "come to home both of you, and I will tell you your chance. I must now give either of you three balls, and if you can hit one of

them, and run the whole round before we can pop the ball in the hole, or 'ground' it, as we say, all your side comes in again."

"Indeed!" said James; "then do we begin counting again?"

"Certainly you do, and it is only counted as one innings. So choose, which of you two shall try for the 'Rounders.'"

"James, certainly," said Miller; "he can hit harder and run faster than I can."

Seymour and James then took their places, each watching the other. James refused one or two balls, and then delivered such a stroke that the ball passed over the heads of the fielding party. Away ran James, and had just reached the third station, when a shout from Seymour, of "Throw it up!" made him aware that the ball was in the hands of his enemies. He just looked towards the home and saw Seymour standing close by the hole, and looking in the air for the coming ball. He thought that his chance was gone for ever; but still strained every nerve to get round in time. The ball dropped about three yards in front of Seymour, who sprang forward to meet it, and James had just crossed the home line when the ball dropped in the hole.

Triumphant shouts from his own party hailed his success, and they resumed their innings. After making about thirty or so, they were all out except James and Knight.

"Now for 'Rounders,' again," cried James.

"Not twice, thank you," said Seymour; "once is quite enough for reasonable beings; besides which it is against rules. You may try to keep the game going as long as you can; but no more 'Rounders' until the next innings."

It was hard work for the two, as they had at least to run half way at every ball; and once, just as Jackson got in, James was struck with the ball.

"I don't care," cried Jackson; "if I can't get the 'Rounders,' I may count one for our side;" and he boldly took his stand. A fair blow, and off went Jackson. Just as he reached the fourth station, and was starting for the fifth, the ball came into Seymour's hand, who waited for him to run past, making sure of hitting him. But as the ball left Seymour's hand, down dropped Jackson, and the ball passed harmlessly over him. In the meanwhile he picked himself up and ran home.

"Well done!" shouted Seymour, "but you won't do that again."

Nothing daunted, Jackson again took his station, dog-stick in hand. The ball was struck and he started off again. He was, however, so thoroughly tired by his former efforts, that Seymour, on receiving the ball, ran past him and put in the ball without difficulty. Still, Jackson received great applause for his spirited conduct.

The opposite side now went in, James being "feeder." Seymour advised him to take that position, because much depends upon the "feeder" in the management of the game; and from his position in the middle of the stations, he can either put out a player by throwing the ball at him, or by grounding it in the hole, as his judgment directs.

When George's side were all out, and James's came in again, Seymour warned them to beware, for he was going to play in earnest. And so he did, for he put out both James and Knight by pretending to throw the ball to the batsman, and then aiming it at them as they left their stations in hopes of gaining a few steps towards the next station.

And, having given private directions to his party, who were not very accurate marksmen, in no case to throw the ball at a running player, but to send it home,

he grounded out one or two of the others, besides catching a ball, that Miller had sent too near him. So as their best players were thus disabled, they had no chance of obtaining the "Rounders," and eventually Seymour's side won.

CHAPTER VI.

GAMES AT MARBLES—"RING-TAW"—VIEW OF THE RING—RULES OF THE GAME—HOW TO HOLD AND SHOOT A MARBLE PROPERLY—VIEW OF HAND AND MARBLE—"CONQUEROR" AND "LAG-OUT"—"THREE-HOLES"—RULES OF THE GAME—MODE OF PLAYING—"PYRAMID"—"NINE-HOLES" OR "BRIDGE-BOARD"—VIEW OF THE BRIDGE—RULES OF THE GAME—CONSTRUCTION OF THE BRIDGE—DESCRIPTION OF THE GAME.

"CAN you play at marbles, White?" asked Price of Tom, who was sitting in the window on a rainy May morning, looking disconsolately at the drops that were steadily falling, and hoping to see in the leaden sky some break that might presage sunshine and fine weather.

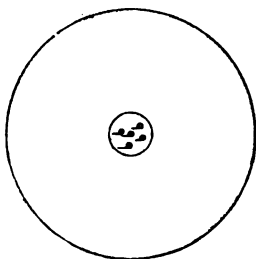
"Oh yes," said Tom, with alacrity, "I can play at marbles capittally, and I have a whole bag full in my box."

"That's right," answered Price; "bring them into the barn, for we are all going to play there, and you may as well join us, as look out of window."

So Tom brought out his bag of marbles, buttoned his jacket well, jumped on his stilts, for he was now a good stilt-walker, and in a few huge strides had reached the barn. There he found the other boys collected, and rather noisily discussing the various games.

"Ring-taw is the best, after all," said James. "We all know the rules of it, and we may as well get ourselves in practice."

So saying, he drew a ring on the floor, about eight feet across, and in the middle of this a smaller ring, only six inches in diameter.



"Now," said James; "we all have played together, except you, White. Do you know the rules of the game?"

"I think so," said Tom; "we each put a marble in the little ring, and at first shoot at them from outside the large ring. After our first shots we shoot from the places where our taws stop. Then, if we can knock any out of the little ring, we keep them, unless some one else hits our taw with his own, and then we are 'killed,' and have to give him all the marbles that

we had won in that game. But if our taw remains inside the little ring, we have to put back again all the marbles that we had won, and one besides as a fine for playing so badly. I think that is all."

"Nearly all," said James; "but you have forgotten to tell us how we know who wins the game."

"Those who get out the most marbles win," replied he.

"Right enough," said James; "so let us begin."

The boys then placed their marbles in the ring, and Tom was just going to shoot, when he was startled by cries of "Muff!" "Knuckle down!" "No fubs!"

He looked up in amaze, and George said, in a tone of infinite disgust—"Is *that* the way to hold a marble?"

"Why not?" answered poor Tom, astounded; "I always hold it so."

"Oh! *do* you?" continued George; "perhaps you would like to bowl the taw?"

"I don't at all know what you mean," said Tom, becoming more and more puzzled.

"I'll tell you," said James, taking compassion on him. "You have stuck your marble in the bend of your forefinger, and you cannot make it fly any distance

without pushing your hand after it, which we don't allow. Look here ; put the marble between the tip of your forefinger and your thumb, and then you can make it go almost any distance. Just see how I will shoot my taw !" continued James, making his marble strike the wall some five or six paces distant and recoil to his hand.



"When you shoot, you must put one of your knuckles on the ground and keep it there, or it is not counted a fair shot. Let me tell you, too, that you will lose a fortune in marbles if you have a bag of such good ones as those in your pocket. Why, they are all taws ! You should get a bag of cheap marbles to put in the ring as 'shots,' and keep the others as your own taws. And take care to choose a taw of a curious or striking colour, because then there will be no disputes about its ownership. Now, let me see you shoot a taw properly !"

"It is so awkward," said Tom, after a few trials ; "and it won't go straight."

"Nonsense," answered James ; "the taw is clever enough : it is the fingers that are awkward, and if the fingers only send it straight, it will go straight."

So Tom did his best, but it was some time before he learned to change his manner of shooting, for to get rid of a bad habit is always a difficult task, even at marbles.

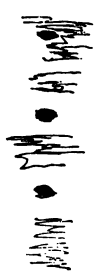
“Are there any other games at marbles besides ‘Ring-taw?’” said Tom one day; “I am pretty well tired of always playing one game.”

“To be sure,” said Seymour; “there are some games which we can play out of doors, and some which can be played on a table, or on the carpet, and do not require chalk rings.”

“Tell me an out-door game,” said Tom, “and we will try now. It is a fine day.”

“Very good,” replied Seymour; “there is ‘Three-holes,’ for example, and ‘Lag-out,’ and ‘Conqueror,’ and several others. But I don’t like ‘Conqueror,’ for it only consists in throwing marbles at each other, and trying which is the hardest. There is no skill in the game, and it only depends on the strength of the marbles. Then ‘Lag-out’ is nothing particular, for you only throw the marbles, and don’t shoot them; so it will not do for us, because here we allow no marble game when the marble is not properly shot from the finger and thumb. ‘Three-holes,’

however, is not at all a bad game, and I'll teach it you."



"See, I make three little holes in the ground, all in a line, and about two yards from each other. There! Now I draw a line about two yards from the first hole, and from that line we shoot."

"Do we shoot into the holes?" asked Tom.

"You *try* to do so," answered Seymour. "You first try to send the marble into the first hole. If it rolls in and remains there, you shoot it to the second; and if you can get it into the third, you win the game. Each of us puts down a marble when we begin, and the player who wins takes all the marbles. Price, come and join us at Three-holes, for you know the rules. We will draw lots for the first shot."

The first lot fell to Price, and the next to Seymour, Tom being last. Price then shot at the first hole, but missed it, and Seymour followed with the same result.

"Now, White," said Seymour, "be careful where you put your marble; and if you are not sure of getting into the hole, do not attempt it, for if you miss, Price and I have the choice of trying for the holes, or of shooting

at your taw, after we have once got our taws lodged in the first hole."

"Suppose, then, he hits me," said Tom, "am I killed, as in 'Ring-taw?'"

"Not only that," said Seymour, "but you must either give up your taw to the player who hit you, or ransom it with another. So you must keep clear of the other players, for it is easier to kill a taw than to pass the three holes."

Tom then shot his marble only about half the distance between the line and the first hole. Price took up his taw, which was lying quite close to the first hole, shot it easily into it, and then, seeing both taws at a distance, determined to take advantage of his position, and to put his marble as near the second hole as possible, so as to make sure of it next time.

Seymour, perceiving his mode of play, was rather perplexed, because, if he did not follow him up, he would win quietly while the other two were skirmishing, and so he determined on a bold stroke. Taking very careful aim, he put the marble into the first hole, and then shot it forward so that it rested about half way between the second and third.

After Tom had made another unsuccessful shot, Price, whose marble was nearly in a line with the second hole, and about three or four inches in front of it, found no difficulty in gaining that hole also ; but then he felt himself in a difficulty. He could not leave his marble near the last hole, for if he did so, there was Seymour's taw lying within shooting distance, and Seymour was too good a shot for a hope of escape. So he thought that he would go as far beyond the third hole as Seymour was beyond the second ; and then, as Seymour had to return to the second hole, he had still one hole in advance, and hoped to succeed. Moreover, there would be the chance of hitting Seymour's taw on the way ; and if he could do that, Price was so far behind that victory would be easy.

So he took a direct shot for Seymour's taw, and would have struck it, had not his own marble made an unfortunate leap, and jumped over the taw instead of striking it.

"Good shot that !" observed Seymour ; " I was quite frightened, when I saw your taw coming so straight !"

He then sent his taw to the second hole, and shot it forward, so that it was just in front of the third hole. Tom had by this time worked up his taw through the

first hole, and after Seymour's shot, got it into the second. He then sent it about a yard further on.

Now came the tug of war, Tom's marble being half way between the two last holes, Seymour's close to the last hole, and Price's just beyond, it being Price's turn to shoot. If he missed, he must lose, for he had been out-generalled at the beginning of the game, and had not recovered it. So he took a good aim at Seymour's marble, shot over the third hole, and struck the taw on the side.

"What a shame!" said Seymour; "I made sure of winning. Take your marble."

Now Price had to shoot again, and, not fearing Tom as an antagonist, sent his taw close to the third hole. Tom, however, had, as has already been mentioned, a very good idea of bowling, and calling into practice his skill in bowls, he shot his marble slowly forward. It reached the hole, and nearly stopped at its very brink, wavered a moment, and then dropped in.

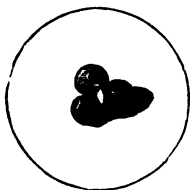
So Tom won the game of "Three-holes," after all.

"I had no idea, though," said he, "that there was so much thinking required in the game."

When they came within doors, he reminded Seymour of his promise to tell him of some other games.

"They are called 'Pyramid' and 'Nine-holes,'" said Seymour ; "and are very easy to learn. For 'Pyramid,' we manage in this way."

So saying, he sat down on the carpet, spreading his legs as wide as he could. He then took a piece of white thread, and tied its ends together, so that, when spread, it made a small circle. This he laid on the carpet, in the angle formed by his legs, and then pulling four marbles out of his pocket, he built them up into the form of a pyramid in the very middle of the circle. The pyramid was formed by putting three marbles close to each other, and the fourth upon them, as may be seen in the accompanying drawing.



"There," said he, when he had completed this arrangement, "if you play with me now, you knuckle down about four feet from the pyramid, and shoot at it. Every time you shoot, you give me a marble, and if you hit the pyramid, you have as many marbles as you can knock out of the ring. Who'll play?" "I will," said all the boys; and, having each paid a marble, they began to shoot.

At the first shot, George struck the pyramid, but too

high, so he took the top marble very neatly off the other, and so only recompensed himself for his shot. Jackson's shot was a better one, for it drove three marbles out of the ring in different directions, while the fourth was so exactly balanced on the line, that no one could decide whether it had passed or not. So Jackson gave it up, and it soon formed part of another pyramid.

Tom tried a shot, but missed ; while Price struck the pyramid and sent a marble out of the ring, but as he had not used sufficient force, his own taw remained in the circle. So poor Price had not only to give up the marble that he had knocked out of the ring, but to ransom his own taw with another marble, thus losing three by this unlucky shot, and compensating Seymour for his loss on Jackson's shot.

The boys were pleased with the game, by way of a change, and played at it several evenings in succession.

"There is a game, that you mentioned, called 'Nine-holes,' is there not?" said Tom to Seymour, one of these evenings. "How are you to make nine holes in the carpet?"

"We do not make any holes at all," said Seymour ; "they are ready cut in a board, and I will fetch it."

He then left the room, and in a few minutes returned with the object that is here shown.



"That looks just like a bridge," said Tom.

"It is a bridge," replied Seymour ; "and you see it has nine arches. Sometimes the game is called ' Bridge-board.' "

"We put the bridge at one end of the table, and try to shoot through the arches from the other. You see that the arches are only just large enough to let a marble roll through them, so it takes a good shot to succeed. Each player takes turns to be bridge-keeper, and the game is on the same principle as 'Pyramid.' "

"Then I suppose each player pays one marble to the keeper every time that he shoots ; and, if he sends his taw through either of the arches, the keeper pays him as many marbles as is indicated by the number over each."

"But, if we shoot hard, the marble may go so fast,

that we should not be certain which arch it went through."

"Just so," replied Seymour ; " but if you look at the back of the bridge, you will see that each arch leads into a little stall or house, the back of which is formed by a board, about half a marble's height from the ground, so that you can see under it, but a marble cannot pass. And these divisions keep the marbles in their proper houses, to which the arches lead."

"So they do," said Tom ; " that is a clever idea."

"I remember another way of playing at 'Bridge-board,'" said James, " where there is no keeper at all. Each boy has three shots, for which he pays a marble. After they have all shot, they count up, and the player who has gained most points, wins them all."

The boys then put up the arch, and played with various success. And "Bridge-board" was always a favourite amusement, for, as it could be played on a table, it was always ready to hand.

CHAPTER VII.

“HARE-AND-HOUNDS”—TEARING SCENT—ARRANGING THE GAME—THE TWO FLAGS—THE START—TOM’S MISHAP—ADVICE TO WET BOYS—NARROW ESCAPE—THE FARMER’S MISTAKE—A DISAPPOINTMENT—INSULTED BY THE HARE—THE PROVOKING BOY—EXCITEMENT OF THE HOUNDS—SCENT LOST—THE FLAGS COME INTO USE—TALLY-HO—SPLENDID FINISH—“LEAP-FROG,” AND ITS USE.

“HURRAH !” cried the elder boys, after the morning school, one fine day in June ; “ Dr. Benson says, that if we like to have a good ‘ Hare-and-hounds ’ chase on Thursday, he will give us a holiday. So get together all the old copybooks and newspapers that you can, and begin tearing.”

“ Why should we tear copybooks, because the Doctor gives us a holiday ? ” asked Tom.

“ We want it for ‘ scent,’ ” replied George.

“ Sent ! ” said Tom ; “ sent ! who was sent ? and what have copybooks to do with being sent ? ”

“ Oh, dear ! oh, dear ! ” said George, “ what a green fellow you are, White, with your reasons ! You’ll kill me with laughing some of these days.”

"Don't laugh at me so," said Tom ; "I don't like it, and cannot see what there is to laugh at."

"Why, it's SCENT, s-c-e-n-t," said George, "because we are going to hunt the hare ; and the hare, that's Miller, will drop bits of paper as he runs away ; and the hounds, that's ourselves, will follow him by the paper, just as real hounds follow a hare by the scent. Do you see now ?"

"Yes, I see," answered Tom, "and I have plenty of old copybooks to tear up. But I wish that you would not laugh at me so."

"Well, I won't if I can help it ; but if you will make such queer mistakes, and talk about being *sent*—Oh—" and George ran fairly out of the room.

There were two days to spare ; so great was the tearing of copybooks, and much were fingers chafed in the work. But by the Thursday morning, the paper was pressed into a great bag, and every one was eager to start.

"Don't be in a hurry," said James ; "we have a hard morning's run before us, and if we tire ourselves now we shall break down. Jackson, you must be whipper-in, and here's your flag." So James, who had a horn slung over his shoulders, handed to Jackson a little red flag fastened on a slight rod, some five feet long, having a

spike at the butt-end. He also had another flag, similar in shape, but white in colour. This he retained in his own hands.

"Now," said James, "are you all ready to start?"

"Yes, yes," cried the boys impatiently.

"Then just listen to me," said James, "and I will tell you how we shall manage. I shall be huntsman, and Miller will be hare, and go off while we wait in the school-room, so that we cannot see which way he has gone, and in ten minutes we shall start after him. When we see the paper-scent, I shall run on first, and you must all follow me in line, Jackson bringing up the rear."

"If I lose the scent anywhere, as is likely to be the case, I shall call 'Lost!' Jackson will then stick his flag on the spot where the last piece of paper was seen, and we shall all move round it in a circle. We shall be sure to hit upon the scent in that way, and when it is found, I shall blow the horn, and start off after the scent, and you will follow me. You will at once know where I am by looking for the white flag."

"Capital things are those flags," said George; "last year we lost the hare several times, and had to come *home again*, but since we took these flags into the field

with us, we have not lost one, and it saves so much time too."

"Now, Miller, off with you," said James; "don't waste scent by scattering any until you come to the bottom of the lane; and don't tire yourself at first, or you will be knocked up, and we shall soon catch you."

Away went Miller with the bag of scent strapped firmly under his left arm, which is the most convenient way of carrying it, except on the back as a knapsack. But in the latter case it is awkwardly placed for the hands, which cannot be put into it, unless it is shifted.

The boys watched the clock, and the ten minutes seemed as many hours. At last the hand came round to the mark; and, with a cheer, out went the boys, running tumultuously down the lane, in spite of James's remonstrances.

When they reached the lane, there lay the little square pieces of paper, and others could be faintly seen, at a short distance up the road.

"In line!" shouted James, running forward; and when he saw the line well formed, he blew a cheering blast on the horn, and pressed up the hill.

The boys were at first rather annoyed at the slow pace at which James went ; but after they had run about a mile or so, they were much more disposed to call a halt than to go faster. James, however, still proceeded at the same pace in front, and Jackson kept them up to their speed behind. So, after they had gone on some way farther, they had recovered from their oppression, and felt as if they could run any distance without needing to rest. In the run they were much inspirited by the horn, which James blew whenever he saw signs of flagging.

They ran merrily on over a field or two, and had to jump over some little brooks, in one of which Tom plumped up to the middle. He was rather alarmed at this accident, and wanted to go home and change his clothes, for he was always rather afraid of getting wet. James, however, would not hear of desertion ; and Jackson told him to run on.

"Better for you," said George ; "if you go home, you will loiter by the way, for you will find your wet clothes very heavy, and there will not be the excitement of the chase to keep you going ; then you will sit down, and if you do, you will take cold to a *certainty*."

"My clothes *are* heavy," said Tom ; "and the water goes plish-plash in my shoes. I can hardly get along at all."

"Give me your hand, then," said George good-naturedly, "and I'll help you on until you are right again."

On they ran ; and, on descending a hill, they caught sight of Miller, who was quietly sitting on a gate, and resting himself, having no notion that his pursuers were so near. They all gave a loud shout, and set off at full speed, in hopes to catch him before he could get out of sight. Miller, on seeing them, jumped off the gate, and made for a thick hedge that skirted the field ; into this he plunged, and was seen no more.

Presently the scent led through a little village, and skirted a farm-yard ; whereupon all the inhabitants turned out to stare at the unwonted sight.

"It's the foxhounds !" said one man ; "I hear the horn."

"No, it isn't," said another, "it's the militia ; look at their flags !"

"You don't know what you're talking about," said a third ; "it's the railway measurers come to make a railway through our farm. Turn 'em out."

And all the labourers sallied forth, armed with pitchforks and flails, in defence of the farm.

After much argument, James convinced them that the boys were too small to survey for railways, and tried to explain the game, but without success.

As they left the farm behind, George asked Tom White how his wet clothes felt.

"I had forgotten all about them," said Tom ; "they are quite dry now."

"To be sure they are," said George ; "there is nothing like a good run for drying clothes when you cannot change them. But you must remember to change them directly you get home, or you may still catch cold."

After a while, James gave a sudden shout of "Tally-ho! I see him."

"Where? where?" asked the boys.

"There he is," said James, "sitting quite at his ease on a stump. We'll have him this time."

But when they came nearer, they found that Miller was on the opposite side of a canal, which they had not noticed.

"Good morning, gentlemen," said he, taking off his hat politely ; "will you have me now, or wait till you

get me? There's a bridge exactly half a mile to your right: hadn't you better go to it? I didn't like to go on without speaking to you; it would not be polite."

"You young rascal!" exclaimed George, shaking his fist at him; "we'll have you yet. Go on, James."

"In that case," responded Miller, "I have the honour of wishing you farewell;" and, as the line of hounds dashed along the side of the canal, he took up his bag of paper, which had been lying at his side, slung it over his shoulder, put his hands into his pockets,—after carefully building a little heap of paper on the spot where he stood, and putting a stone on it to prevent it from being blown away,—and sauntered off deliberately, to the extreme exasperation of Tom.

"I wish we could have jumped the canal," said he.

"Not allowable," replied George; "the hounds are not permitted to make short cuts; and if Miller ran within ten yards of us, and the scent led round as many miles, we must go over every step of the way."

When they reached the spot where Miller had been, and had kicked away the insulting paper heap, they were greeted by a shout of laughter, and were mortified to see Miller again on the opposite side, close to the spot where they had halted on seeing him half-an-hour

before. The boy had only sauntered away slowly until he was hidden by a hedge ; and had then made the best of his way to the next bridge, crossed it, and skirted the canal.

“What a re—markable circumstance !” observed Miller. “Dear me, now ! Allow me to sing you a song !”

So he first deliberately built another paper heap, and then began at the top of his voice,—

“He turned, and left the spot ;”

and suiting the action to the word, he did turn, and left the spot—applying a handkerchief to his eyes, as if in allusion to the last line of the stanza.

“I can’t stand this,” cried James ; “after him, boys !”

And blowing a defiant blast on the horn, away started James, and all the boys after him, without regard to keeping the line, for they burned to catch the provoking lad. And, indeed, James had selected him as hare for that very quality ; knowing that, towards the end of a chase, unless the boys have some such excitement, they are apt to lose interest, and to lag on the way.

Miller now went off in a straight line for home, his

former line having been very circuitous. As he was a day-boy, he had taken advantage of a half-holiday to survey his course beforehand, and see that he did not get into any inextricable difficulties, such as being caught between two arms of a river, or trespassing on forbidden lands.

Besides, if he crossed his track, he would be then considered as caught, and would have to wait until the hounds came up. Moreover, he looked forward to another chase or two, and so managed that he could make at least three more runs, without interfering with the tracks left by either of the former chases.

He knew that he was well ahead, and so did not hurry himself. But the hounds had made up their minds to catch him, and followed so fast that they were not more than a field behind him, when they again caught sight of him.

"Now we have him!" cried George; and they all dashed ahead at full speed. But "more haste worse speed," for they were so much engaged in pursuit of Miller that they overshot the scent, and were suddenly halted by James's cry of "Lost!"

Down went the two flags into the ground, and round went the boys.

Presently James hit off the scent, which ran exactly at right angles to its former course, and led straight to a very thick hedge. Miller had resorted to this stratagem as his only chance of escape ; for he calculated that if the hounds were not very careful, they might overshoot. So, when he got fairly out of sight, behind a hedge, he threw himself on the ground, scrambled away at right angles, and had not quite squeezed himself through a little gap in it, when the hounds entered the field within twenty paces of him.

The gap was a very small one, and some minutes were consumed in getting the whole party through it, so that, when the line was formed, Miller was some three hundred yards ahead, and not half a mile from home.

"At him, boys!" shouted James ; and away they all went straight forward, for it was all open country now, and there was no more chance of losing scent. Hare and hounds were now tried to their utmost, but the hounds gradually gained, for Miller was not a very fast runner, and the bag of paper added to the difficulty of running, although it was gradually lightened.

When they were within twenty yards of the house

James was not three yards behind Miller, and dashed at him. Miller, seeing that he had no chance of reaching the house first, threw himself on the ground, rolled out of James's way, and then resuming his feet with the same effort, made use of his remaining strength to rush forward, and placed his own hand on the door-post just before that of James came on his shoulder.

"Well done, boys!" said Dr. Benson, who then appeared at the door; "that was indeed a good run. Now go, every one of you, and drink a little warm milk; change all your clothes, and we shall have dinner in half-an-hour."

When they had done so, they returned to the house, feeling wonderfully refreshed, and very hungry, although tired.

"Did not I see some one in the water?" said the Doctor.

"I tumbled into a brook, Sir," replied Tom; "but how did you see me?"

"Oh!" replied Dr. Benson, "I enjoy a 'Hare-and-hounds' as much as any one; but as I cannot run after the hare myself, I go after him by means of a telescope from the top of the house, which commands all the

country round. What was that disturbance at Little Okeham, James?"

So James told his father of the labourers' error respecting their flags, and of his explanation. After dinner, Dr. Benson told the boys not to exert themselves, and lent them some illustrated books with which to amuse themselves until tea-time, immediately after which he dispatched the two younger boys to bed. The three elder soon followed them; and they slept so soundly that the Doctor kindly allowed them an extra hour of rest in the morning.

Next day, when the boys had finished their breakfast, they went out in the playing field as usual, but were all so stiff, and some so footsore from their excursion of the preceding day, that they could not run properly. Tom was especially stiff, for he had not been accustomed to such long journeys; and, besides, his wet clothes had helped to tire him.

"Last year," said James, "we used to play at 'Leap-frog' the day after our 'Hare-and-hounds,' for it is a capital game to take away the stiffness acquired by walking. Give me a back, George, and let me see how I get over. Rather stiffly, to be sure," resumed he, as he alighted on the ground;

"but we will do better next time. Let us have a regular game."

"I am sure that I can't jump," said Tom, "for I can hardly walk."

"Then try till you can," answered James. "We will go in succession, and give low backs for you little fellows. Start away, George."

So George stooped down with his back to James, folded his hands on his breast, and lowered his head.

James ran up to him, put his hands on his shoulders, and over he went ; then running a few paces forward, he stood in the same attitude as George. Seymour then went over them both, and followed James's example. Jackson then went over all three, ran forward, and stooped.

"Now then, *are* you two coming?" cried George ; "I am tired of stooping all this time."

"I *cannot* do it," said Tom.

"Then you and Price give backs to each other," said George, "and we bigger ones will have a game to ourselves."

So saying, he jumped over James, then over Seymour, then over Jackson, and then ran on and stooped down again. James then went over the three, and gave a

back ; Seymour went over them, and so they went on playing with animation, until the school-bell rang.

Tom made but a bad business of the first few jumps, for he was not skilled in the game, and was very stiff. However, being inspirited by the example of the elder boys, he tried again, and found that each leap became easier. And, when the bell rang, he was surprised to find that his stiffness had nearly entirely vanished, and he was not so footsore as when he began.

As they went home, he asked James why it was good for the stiffness, and James said that he could not exactly say, but that he had heard his father say that it exercised a different set of muscles which were not stiffened ; and, by driving the blood through the body by exertion, it unstiffened those that had been fatigued.

CHAPTER VIII.

MIDSUMMER HOLIDAYS—VISIT TO THE SEA-SIDE—BATHING—TOM'S FIRST EXPERIENCE OF THE SEA—DIPPING UNDER WATER—THE EYES TO BE KEPT OPEN—MR. EDWARD BENSON'S ARRIVAL—WAVE-SWIMMING—HOW TO SWIM IN A HIGH SEA—MANAGEMENT OF THE WAVES—TOM LEARNS TO SWIM—METHOD OF USING THE HANDS—NECESSITY FOR CONFIDENCE—HOW TO GAIN ENDURANCE.

THE Midsummer holidays had now arrived, and the boys went away to their own homes. Tom was expecting a summons, when Dr. Benson told him that his mother was obliged to go into the north of England to see her sister, who was dangerously ill, and required the presence of some relation.

Poor Tom was dreadfully disappointed, as he had been looking forward to the holidays, when he intended to teach his little sisters the correct way to shoot marbles, and to play trap-ball, and to spin a top; in fact, to play with them most of the games which he had learned during the preceding three months.

"Must I stay here, Sir?" said Tom.

"No, my boy," answered the Doctor; "your Uncle Fielding is coming for you to-morrow. He has taken a house at the sea-side for the holidays, and has invited you to stay with him until we begin school again."

The idea of visiting the sea-side, and meeting his cousins, almost compensated Tom for his disappointment.

When the morrow came, he packed up his box; so that, when Mr. Fielding arrived, he was quite ready to start.

"Take care of my little man!" said Dr. Benson, as they left his house; "and a pleasant holiday to both of you—and to me, too!" muttered the Doctor to himself, as he turned home.

An hour and a half brought the travellers to the house, and Tom was warmly welcomed by his aunt and cousins.

Had not Tom mixed with boys at Dr. Benson's, he would have been daunted by the number of his cousins. There were six of them, and the three youngest he had never seen. However, in the course of the afternoon, they were all very sociable, picking up shells and *curious sea-weeds* on the shore, and of course getting

very wet about the feet and skirts ; and in the evening they were on quite affectionate terms.

During breakfast, next morning, Mr. Fielding said to George and Richard, his two eldest sons—

“This is a beautiful day for a bathe ; so take Tom with you, and teach him how to swim.”

“I think we had better not,” replied Richard ; “for you know that Edward Benson will be here this evening, and he swims so beautifully, and teaches so well, that we will leave that to him ; and to-day we will go with Tom and make him accustomed to the water.”

So they went out on the beach ; and, after waiting until the tide was suitable, they all three entered a bathing-machine, and were drawn into the water.

Up to that time, Tom had been very valiant ; but when he had undressed, and looked at the rolling water lashing the sides of the machine, he hung back.

“Come in, Tom !” said Richard, who was already in the water ; “don’t be frightened ! I’ll take care of you.”

Tom then descended the steps of the machine, and being urged by George above and Richard below, cautiously put one foot into the water. Just at that

moment, a larger wave than usual dashed against the machine, and splashed over him. Tom turned round and retreated precipitately into the interior of the machine, gasping from the effects of the sudden splash.

"Come!" said Richard to him, "there is nothing to be afraid of; and if you had gone in at once, you would not have had that splash."

"But the water is so cold!" said Tom, shivering in the corner.

"Not a bit," replied Richard; "you will find it warm enough when you are once in, but as long as you stand there half wet and half dry, you will be cold. Come in with me!"

So he went into the machine, took Tom in his arms, jumped into the water, and had set Tom on his feet before he had time to remonstrate.

"Don't hold me so tight," said he; "the water will not run away with you. Now duck your head under water, or you will have a headache before long. Down with you,—and don't be afraid. I will hold your hand."

"Let me get my breath first!" pleaded Tom, for it was the first time that he had ever been in the sea; and he was holding Richard's arm as if he were drowning.

"Duck first and breathe afterwards," replied Richard. "Now then; say one—two—three—and under."

Thus encouraged, Tom made a violent effort; and, as he thought, plunged his head at least two feet beneath the surface.

"Why, Tom," said his two cousins, "you don't call *that* ducking, do you?"

"I put my head under!" said Tom, squeezing his eyelids together, and pressing up his lips.

"Nonsense!" said Richard; "you did not even get all your face under water, and your head is as dry as a bone. Feel it."

And Tom, on putting his hand to his head, found that in fact he had not wetted a single hair.

"Try again," said his cousins; "or shall we duck you?"

"No, no," answered Tom. "I'll do it myself."

And he made another attempt; during which he appeared to himself to have gone down to the bottom of the sea, and to have stayed there until he was nearly drowned by the water that he felt rushing and roaring in his ears.

"That's better," said Richard; "you nearly got half your head under that time. Once more."

Tom thought his cousins very hard-hearted, and could not believe at first that his head was not thoroughly wet. But on feeling it, he found that the water had not even touched the top of his head ; and so he made another plunge, and this time achieved the feat.

"There !" cried the two boys ; "now we shall do capitally. How do you feel the water now ?"

"I like it now," said Tom ; "but it makes my eyes smart, although I shut them tight when I put my head under."

"That is the very reason why they smarted," said Richard. "You should never shut your eyes when you go under water, and then they will not smart at all. Look here !"

So Richard lay back in the water, and keeping his eyes fixed on Tom, sank beneath the surface, and after remaining there for a few seconds, rose again. Tom saw that his cousin's eyes were never closed, and asked whether he could see under water.

"That depends on the water," answered he. "If it is bright and clear as it is to-day, I can see to some distance ; but if it becomes muddy or sandy, I cannot see a yard."

"How did you learn to swim?" asked Tom.

"Edward Benson taught us both. Wait until to-morrow or next day, and then you will see him swim. Now, as you are not used to the water, get out and dress, while we have a swim."

So they put Tom back into the machine, gave him in charge to an attendant, and then swam out seawards. Tom looked at them with envy, mixed with fear; for when he saw how far they were from the shore, he thought how frightened he himself should be in deep water and no one near. In a quarter of an hour the brothers returned, and after the three had walked about a little on the sand, they went home.

"What do you think of the sea?" asked Mrs. Fielding.

"I liked it very much when I was in," said Tom; "but it was very cold at first. And, Aunt, I taste salt."

"Are you ready to taste your dinner?" asked Mrs. Fielding; "for if so, get ready as fast as you can."

"I never felt so hungry in my life," replied Tom; "is it the bathing?"

"I suppose it is," answered Mrs. Fielding; "for

hunger is a very general complaint here after a sea dip."

In the course of the evening Edward Benson arrived. Tom was quite astonished when he saw him ; for he had pictured to himself a tall, red-faced, loud-voiced gentleman, with great whiskers ; instead of this formidable personage, there appeared a rather small, and very quiet young man, pale and slight, and having rather an aspect of weakness and ill-health. Tom sat and looked at him in quite a bewildered way ; for he could hardly believe that this was the Edward Benson of whom he had heard recorded so many feats of strength and agility.

Mr. Benson saw the look, and observing that he supposed him to be the young cousin of whom he had heard, called Tom to him, and began to talk to him about his school-life. Tom got on very well with him, and before long was quite at his ease, though still astonished.

Next morning, when he got up, he went to the window to see if it was a fine day ; and finding it so, expressed his hope that they should bathe again. After breakfast they went down to the sea, when they found that the wind had been blowing rather freshly during

the night, and that the waves were so high that bathing was out of the question. However, after they had remained there a few minutes, Edward Benson went away to the edge of the water, and then said quietly, "Beautiful day for a swim."

"Surely you are not going to bathe on such a day as this?" said the boys; "we should be drowned directly."

"Possibly," said he; "I shall not."

So he went off to the bathing-men, and after much remonstrance on their part, had a machine placed as far in the water as they dared.

"He will be dashed to pieces by those waves," said the attendant, shaking his head; and, getting a long rope ready to hand, he waited by the water, in expectation of being called on for help.

Presently a great wave rolled up, and as it retreated, out jumped Mr. Benson, and was borne out to sea on its top. The boys then lost sight of him altogether; but soon saw him leaping into the air, to escape a wave that thus passed under him, and spending its force on the shore, left him beyond its power. Just then a huge roller came along, with the white foam cresting its top, and accompanied with a roar that was perceptible above all the other waves. The green mass

overhung Mr. Benson, and appeared to be on the point of overwhelming him, when he suddenly joined his hands over his head, and sprang straight like an arrow into the midst of the watery mountain. The boys were terrified at the sight, and expected to see his body dashed on the shore. But when the roller had broken, they saw him quite at his ease in the distance, and waving his hand to encourage them.

After a while, they saw him returning; when he was near shore, he remained in the same position some little time, balancing himself on the water, and letting the waves pass under him. At last, when a very large wave rolled up, he threw himself upon its crest, and it carried him completely into the machine.

When he came out, the boys came up to him, expecting to find him quite tired, but only found him ready for dinner.

"How you frightened us!" said George and Richard; "we thought that the roller was going to drown you."

"No," said he; "the water seldom drowns people who do not drown themselves; and, as long as you have confidence, you are safe enough."

"Did not you find the waves very troublesome?" asked George Fielding.

"Rather so at first," replied he; "but the worst waves are those near the shore; and when you are past them, the water is very pleasant, for there are not many of those white curling tops that splash in the face."

"I saw you go *through* one wave, and *over* others," said George, who was anxious to swim as well as his instructor; "why was that?"

"If you think," said Mr. Benson, "you will remember that after the first wave had carried me out, there came several sharp, cutting waves, but of no very great height. So, by springing out of the water as high as possible, just as they began to lift, I got over them. But when that large wave came, if I had sprung ever so high, it would have caught me near its top, and hurled me ashore like a cork; then, before I could recover my feet, it would have recoiled again, and drawn me with it, so that I should probably have been drowned within a yard or two of the shore. But, by diving straight through the *base* of the wave, the whole weight of water passed harmlessly above me, and I came out at the other side almost immediately."

"Could you not have dived through the other waves?" asked Richard.

"Certainly I could ; but as I could go over them, it would have been useless to expend the breath and the strength that are required when one dives. In fact, the management of the breath is the great secret in sea-bathing ; and when there is a short, chopping sea, it is not very easy to draw breath exactly when you want it. But with these great, swelling waves, there is no difficulty, when you do not lose your presence of mind."

"How oddly you got back into the machine !" said George. "You seemed to vanish by magic !"

"Not much magic in the matter," replied Mr. Benson. "You saw that the waves were so high, that if I had tried to walk into the machine, the first wave that came would have knocked me down, and perhaps stunned me, for they were higher than my head. So I waited for a good large wave, which would run a long way up shore, and made it carry me."

"But you said just now, that if a large wave had caught you, it would have stunned you."

"True ; but then we just reversed the process, and instead of the wave catching me, I caught the wave. I had my head towards the shore then, and could steer myself, besides having the machine to hold on by ; so that the

return wave could not carry me back with it. I let it run me up to the machine, caught hold of the upper step with my hands, held on until the wave had passed, and then ran up as fast as I could."

"I see," said George. "You took advantage of the waves, and made the return wave take you to sea, and the shore wave bring you back again."

"That is just the point; for if I had tried to get out against the shore wave, or to come in against the return wave, I should have been at their mercy. So, just remember, that if you only watch the waves properly, you can make them serve you: and don't fight a wave, for it is much too strong for you."

"Now, my boy," continued Mr. Benson, addressing Tom, "when the sea is smoother you shall be a swimmer; but you must not peril your life by attempting to bathe when the water is rough."

Several days passed before the wind ceased and the sea resumed its calm aspect. When that was the case, the three boys and Mr. Benson went off together. The two brothers went into one machine, and Mr. Benson kindly took little Tom with him.

"Now, Tom," said he, from the water, "I want you to jump down. I shall catch you, and pop you under

in a moment; and then there will be no shivering on the brink, nor feeling the water with the toes. Come along! I tell you fairly that I shall duck you, because I never play tricks. So jump."

And Tom did jump, and was almost immediately standing by Mr. Benson's side, dashing the water from his eyes.

"There," said Mr. Benson, "that is much better than waiting and shuddering, and getting frightened and cold for a quarter of an hour. Now we will learn to swim."

So he took Tom by the hand, and led him out until the water was nearly up to his chin.

"Don't be afraid," said he. "I shall keep between you and the deep water, and every stroke you take will bring you to shore. Now, put your hands flat on the water, and the two thumbs touching each other. That's right. Now, stretch them out as far as they will go, spread them outwards, and bring them back again, slowly."

When Tom had done this several times, and learned the proper motion, Mr. Benson said to him,—

"This time lean well forward, while you spread *your hands*, and lift your feet from the ground."

And as Tom did so, he placed one hand under Tom's chest, and held him up slightly. "Now," said he, "go on as you began, but much slower."

When Tom had learned this movement, he directed him how to strike out with his legs, in much the same way as his hands. While Tom was practising, Mr. Benson walked slowly along, so that Tom appeared to himself to be swimming, and gained confidence. By degrees, his instructor withdrew his supporting hand, and Tom swam some five or six strokes unassisted. But no sooner did he discover it than he collapsed, and went under.

"I told you," said Mr. Benson, as he set him upright, "that people drown themselves. You were swimming well enough until you got frightened. And you do not hold your head high enough back; for you should try to look at the sky above your head when you are learning to swim. Try again."

But poor Tom was so startled by his immersion, and had got so much salt water into his mouth, that he only stood spluttering and coughing, and could not be induced to make another attempt.

"Well, then," said Mr. Benson, "get on the steps, and watch me as I swim backwards and forwards."

So he passed and repassed just in front of his little pupil, showing him how to manage the body and limbs. Then, telling Tom to go to his cousins, he started off for another long swim, from which he did not return until Tom was dressed and on the shore again.

Day after day Tom went into the water ; and before half his holidays were over, had made some progress in the art of swimming, although he was not yet strong enough, or sufficiently self-confident, to be permitted to swim far from shore, or when the waves were running at all high. Mr. Benson was very kind to the little boy ; for he saw that he was desirous to learn, and struggled well to overcome his nervousness.

One day, as the waves were moderately high,—too much so for Tom,—Mr. Benson told the two elder boys to come out with him for a lesson in wave-swimming.

But they had not gone above a hundred yards from shore before he turned back ; and they were obliged to accompany him, although he would give no reason.

When they came near the shore, and George was able to put his feet on the ground, he did so with an air of relief.

“ I saw you were knocking up,” said Mr. Benson,

"and no wonder, when you strike out so quickly. You take at least three strokes to my one; and Richard is nearly as bad. You must not measure yourself against waves until you can learn to swim much more placidly."

So he made both the boys practise with him daily, making them swim stroke for stroke with himself: and, during the remainder of the holidays, never permitted them to go more than fifty yards from shore. But he made them swim backwards and forwards so often without stopping or resting, and with such slow strokes, that they were rather annoyed.

"Why do you keep us at this stupid work so long?" asked George, one day, when they had returned to shore. "We can swim slowly now."

"Because you have no endurance," replied Mr. Benson. "You cannot swim at full speed a hundred yards without panting as if you never meant to breathe properly again. You swim well enough for a short distance, but you could not swim a mile, even in smooth water."

"Are we never to do more than swim to that buoy and back again?" said Richard, rather disconsolately. "We can do it six times now easily without stopping."

"Yes," said he ; "and when you began you could hardly do it three times. Next year we will do better ; for you shall come to Kingston, and I mean to put you all through a course of gymnastics. You will not be easily out of breath after we have had three months of ropes and poles. Next summer we will swim as far as you like ; but this time we must learn to be cool, and to take slow strokes. It is the great point in swimming not to hurry yourself."

And throughout the remaining week of their holidays nothing was done but "tacking and wearing," as the boys nautically called their swim to sea and back again.

On their last day's swim, Tom was allowed to accompany them, to his great delight ; and he wrote home a very triumphant letter in consequence.

CHAPTER IX.

RETURN TO SCHOOL—CRICKET—TOM'S MISTAKE—DOUBLE WICKET
—PITCHING THE STUMPS—THE POPPING AND BOWLING CREASES
—SIX RULES OF THE GAME—HOW TO HOLD THE BAT—RUNNING
—SWIFT AND SLOW BOWLING—HOW TO HOLD THE BALL—TIP-
PING THE BALL—TOM GAINS THREE RUNS—LEG BEFORE WICKET
—SINGLE WICKET—CATCHING—HOW TO HOLD THE HANDS.

IN due time the holidays passed away, and Tom accompanied Mr. Benson to Kingston, where he was warmly welcomed by Dr. Benson and his playmates, who had already arrived. In a few days they settled into the ordinary school routine, and work and play succeeded each other in due course.

On the first half-holiday, Tom asked George Benson at what game they should play.

"Cricket, of course," answered George; "don't you see that we have the stumps and bats ready?"

"Oh, I can play at cricket capitally!" exclaimed Tom.

"Can you?" said George. "Where did you play, and with whom?"

"I used to play at home, almost every day, on the lawn," replied Tom, "with Sophia and Jane."

"I think that you will find cricket at Kingston rather different from cricket at home," said George.

"Oh, no," answered Tom; "I can play at cricket well."

"Very good; then come with us while we pitch the wicket. There," continued he, as he drove the three stumps into the ground, and measured them; "now take the bat, and let us see how you can use it."

So Tom very confidently took up the bat, and stood by his wicket boldly.

"Price!" said George, "give White a few balls; you are younger and smaller than he is, and we will see how he manages with your bowling."

So Price took the ball and delivered it.

Tom raised his bat for a severe blow, but before he could get it back again, down went his wicket.

"Try again," said George, and another ball was given with precisely the same effect.

"I thought that you could play at cricket capitally."

"So I can at home," replied Tom, much disconcerted; "but Price sends the ball so fast, that it knocks down the wicket while I am going to hit it."

"Why, Price bowls so slowly," said George, "that I put him to bowl for you on purpose. Now, I am going to give a ball. Play!"

But when Tom saw the ball coming, he fairly dropped the bat, and jumped aside quite frightened, for it seemed to him to be shot from a cannon.

"Come here, White!" said George. "Don't be so fond of boasting of your powers. You said that you could shoot a marble, and spin a top, and play at cricket capitally, and you cannot do either. But you never said anything about your bowling at trap-ball, and there you beat every one of us. Now try what you can do in the bowling way."

Tom took the ball, and sent it quite straight towards the wicket several times.

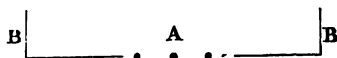
"Very good," said George, "but you must learn to make the ball hop where you want, or to shoot along the ground if you require, and not roll it as you have just done. Now we will begin; and, as there are only Williams and Knight with us to-day, we will play at double-wicket, each one for himself, and he who gets the most runs will win."

So he took out of his pocket a two-foot rule and a piece of chalk, and measured a line six feet eight inches

in length, in the midst of which he placed the stumps, which he removed from the place that they had before occupied. From each end of this line he drew another short line backwards, at right angles with it ; and then measuring to a spot four feet in front of the wickets, he drew another line exactly parallel with the former.

"I do not understand that at all," said Tom.

"I will explain it in a minute," said George ; "wait until I have got up the opposite wicket." So he walked twenty-two paces in front of the wicket that he had just pitched, and proceeded to set up another wicket in exactly the same way.



"Now, White," said he, as he took out his pocket-book and drew the accompanying figure, "you will understand it in a moment.

"These three dots, marked A, represent the wicket. B B is the chalk line which you just now saw me draw, the ends of which are turned back. This is called the 'bowling-crease,' and the two short lines are called the 'return-crease.' Can you remember this?"

"Yes," said Tom, "that is easy."

"Very well," continued George; "the line c, which I drew at a distance of four feet from the wicket, is called the 'popping-crease,' but I don't know why, except that you have to pop your bat down within it as you run."

"That is clear enough," said Tom, "but what are the creases for? I never use them at home."

"I will tell you now," replied George, "if you remember their names and places, and have written down these rules, which I have taken out of the established rules of the game. There are more than these, but we don't want many of them here, as we are only boys as yet, and some of you small. When we can play with eleven on each side, then we shall require all the rules. Now read them."

So Tom read,—

"1. The bowler must deliver the ball with one foot on

the ground behind the bowling-crease, and within the return-crease.

“ 2. The striker is out if either of the bails be bowled off, or a stump be bowled out of the ground.

“ 3. Or, if the ball from the stroke of the bat or hand be caught before it reaches the ground ;

“ 4. Or if, when striking, or when the ball is in play, his wicket is put down when both his feet and his bat are outside the ‘ popping-crease ;’

“ 5. Or if he strikes down his own wicket, or if he stops a straight ball with anything but the bat.

“ 6. If, in running, the players have crossed each other, he that runs for the wicket that is put down is out.”

“ Then,” said George, “ we shall have wide balls in plenty, I dare say, but we will not count them ; and we will not trouble ourselves about the other forty-two rules. Now then, you go to this wicket and Price to the other, and we will give you slow balls.”

Tom and Price took up their positions as batsmen, George and James stood at the wicket as bowlers, while Seymour stood behind Tom’s wicket as keeper. The other boys stood out as fielders, ready to stop the *ball when struck*.

James then took the ball, and prepared to bowl.

"Stop a moment, James!" said George, "while I just show White how to hold his bat. See how I stand!" said George, taking up the bat. "I hold the bat quite upright in front of the wicket, so that if a ball is bowled straight for the middle it would be stopped by the bat. If you let it lean as you were doing, the ball would hop over it and knock down your wicket. Give him an easy one, James!"

Tom did his best to stand in the proper attitude, and succeeded in stopping the ball. He was equally successful with the next, but at the third he forgot his instructions, placed his bat across the wicket instead of holding it upright, and had the mortification of seeing the bails fly off his wicket.

He then surrendered his bat to Williams, and looked on. James took the ball again, and this time sent it with great force towards Williams's wicket. He raised his bat, and struck it such a blow that it passed the fielders, who started in chase of it.

Meanwhile, both batsmen left their wickets, and ran to that opposite them. "Another!" cried Williams, as he reached Price's wicket; and, putting the tip of his bat in the ground just inside the "popping crease,"

he turned, and ran back again, Price following his example.



By this time the ball had been thrown back by Knight, but just too late, for Williams and Price had grounded their bats before it touched the wicket.

“Two for me!” cried Williams.

“Why does James bowl all the balls?” asked Tom.
“This is the fourth.”

“It is my last,” said James. “Each bowler has to give four balls, and those four balls we call an ‘over.’”

Price was soon bowled out, and Knight took his place.

Now that there were two tolerable batsmen, the game became very interesting. George had a swift sharp style of bowling that required great readiness;

but James had a fashion of bowling slow, hopping balls, which used to twist out of their original direction, and slip into the wicket in a very unexpected manner.

When Tom asked how this was done, James showed him that, by giving the hand a peculiar turn just as the ball left the fingers, a twisting movement was communicated to the ball.

Both Williams and Knight, however, were accustomed to the swift and slow balls, and kept their places for some time ; until at last Knight, in aiming at one of the slow balls, only just touched it with his bat,—the ball passed just over his head and was caught by Seymour.

Williams then became bowler, and James took the bat.

However, he did not keep it very long, for while trying to obtain a second run the ball was sent back, and his wicket knocked down, before he was able to ground his bat within the "popping-crease." So he had to go out, having only made five runs, while Williams had made nine.

After they had played some time, it came round to the turn of the two little boys again. Tom went in, and George rather maliciously delivered one of his swiftest balls. Tom, in a great fright, put down his

bat hastily, the ball just touched it, and glancing off its side, shot past the wicket.

"Run! run!" cried Seymour, who was in at the opposite wicket.

"I didn't hit it!" said Tom.

"Run first and argue afterwards!" cried Seymour. So Tom ran.

"Another!" cried Seymour; and away he went again.

"One more!" said Seymour; and Tom, who was quite out of breath, again turned, and reached the "popping-crease" before the ball had been returned.

"Serve you right, Master George," said Seymour, "for giving White such a ball. There are three for you, White, and if you had run at first you would have made four runs."

"I didn't know that I might run unless I *hit* the ball," said Tom; "and I don't think that I could have run again."

"It does not matter," said Seymour, "whether you strike the ball or not, so that it only touches your bat; and that is the way that you may get the better of such fast bowlers as George. If you only tip the ball, it will go far enough without giving you the trouble

of striking it. Now, if you have recovered your breath, we will go on again."

It was now Seymour's turn to strike, and he gained one run. When Tom saw the ball coming towards his wicket, he stepped forward, meaning to strike it with all his strength, and to get three more runs if possible. But instead of so doing, the ball came against his leg, and gave him such pain that he dropped his bat, and began to rub the injured part.

"Out !" cried Seymour.

"Why?" said Tom, who was roused by this remark. "The ball did not touch the wicket."

"No," said James, who had bowled, "but it would have done so if you had not put yourself in the way. Look at the fourth rule. We call it 'Leg before wicket.' So you must go out. Never mind ; you have done well enough for the first time, and have made three runs, which is more than Price has done."

Tom felt himself rather aggrieved at being put out, and hurt at the same time, but he referred to the rule and found that James was right.

So he laid down the bat, and asked to be allowed to stand still and watch the others, as his knee was rather painful, and he could not run easily.

He then watched carefully how the boys held their bats, and how they played, so that he was soon acquainted with the game.

When, a few days afterwards, he came to play a game of single-wicket, he found that it was much the same in practice, except that the ball must be struck in front of the wicket, or no run could be obtained. So it was useless for him to try to tip the ball as he had done in the double-wicket game. However, the elder boys made him practise with a bat at striking imaginary balls until he had attained some skill in the management of it.

And, as he was not accustomed to catching balls, they accustomed him to do so by throwing the ball to him slowly at first, but afterwards at a swifter rate. At first he was very awkward, and complained that the ball hurt his hands.

"Of course it does," said George, who was teaching him. "You *meet* the ball with your hands, instead of letting them yield to the force of the ball. And as long as you hold out your hands separate in that muffish fashion, you will never learn to catch. Look here !"

So George placed his two wrists firmly together, the

right hand above the left, and made Tom copy the attitude.

Habit at first made him separate his hands when he saw the ball coming ; but he had a good eye, and after a while, learned the art of catching.

Bowling he learned easier, although he was not strong enough to bowl swiftly, and had to restrict himself to the slow method.

CHAPTER X.

"I SPY"—RULES OF THE GAME—GEORGE'S AMBUSH—MASTERMAN'S STRATAGEMS—THE LIVING SACK—KITES—HOW TO MAKE A PAPER KITE—THE SKELETON—BALANCING THE FRAME—COVERING THE KITE—FIXING THE STRINGS—FLYING THE KITE—CARRIAGES DRAWN BY KITES—HOW TO GUIDE THE KITES—A CHAIN OF KITES—THE SUDDEN SHOWER—DESTRUCTION OF THE PAPER KITE.

"LET us have a game at 'I spy,' this morning," said the boys ; "we have not played since last year."

"Very well," said Tom ; "tell me how to play it and I will join you."

"Come into the field then," said they, "and we will show you. First, we mark out a 'home' just as we do at 'Warning,' and divide ourselves into two sides. Then we draw lots for first hide, and the party that draws the longest lot, goes off and hides, each one in the place that he thinks best."

"May the other side look after them?" asked Tom.

"Certainly not," replied his instructor ; "they all cover their eyes, and wait for a few minutes at the

'home.' After they have remained there for a short time they call out 'Coming!' three times, and after the third time, they go off and look after the hiders."

"Suppose they see a hider," said Tom; "what happens?"

"Then they call out, 'I spy!' and run home as fast as they can, chased by the hider. If he can touch the seeker before he reaches home, the seeker is put out, and stands aside. That is enough for you to remember just now, and we will begin."

The boys found that when they had not much leisure, it saved their time to keep to the same sides as had been formed previously; and so at once separated into two parties, James and George being the captains as before. George drew the longest straw, and he set off with his party to hide, while Tom and the rest put their hands over their eyes at the "home."

Presently James called out, "Coming!"

"No!" answered a voice.

"Why is that?" asked Tom of James, who was standing next to him.

"That is," said James, "to say that Masterman has not yet found a hiding-place, and wants a little more time. We must still call three times."

Again James called "Coming!" and was not answered, so after two more calls the boys removed their hands from their eyes, and waited for James' instructions.

"Stay here, White," said he, "as you do not know much of the game, and help Miller to look out. If you see any of the hidiers creeping up, call out 'Home!' as loud as you can, and that will be a warning to us to get back as fast as we can."

Just at this moment, Jackson touched him on the arm, and said, "I see a bit of a jacket behind that water-barrel; shall I see who it is?"

James nodded, and Jackson walked slowly in a direction to command a view behind the barrel, pretending not to have seen the boy who was hiding. Suddenly, he made a spring forward, and shouting "I spy Williams!" he ran back to "home," closely followed by Williams, who had hoped to catch some one unawares, as his hiding-place was close to the "home."

"All right, Williams," cried Jackson, as he reached the "home;" "stand aside!"

"Very well done, Jackson," said James; "that is one disposed of. Now I shall go out." But he had hardly

moved two steps before Miller cried "Home !" and he jumped back again, just in time to save himself from Seymour, who was quietly creeping round at the rear of the party.

"Turn out another, Jackson," said James.

So Jackson walked off towards a thick part of the hedge, where he feared a concealed enemy. In so doing, he passed close by the barrel from which he had ejected Williams. What was his surprise, when, from behind that very barrel, George jumped, and touched him before he recovered his surprise.

"How *did* you get there ?" said Jackson ; "there is hardly room for one, and Williams was there just now."

"I slipped behind it when you were all looking after Seymour just now," replied George ; "and I sent him round on purpose. I thought that I should pounce on one of you, but I did not expect to have caught such an old player as yourself."

"There are four yet hiding," said James, "and we must take care of them."

"What happens," asked Tom, "if they do touch us ?"

"In case they can touch three of us, they have their

hide over again, just as in 'Rounders;' so we must keep them from obtaining a second innings. And I have a beautiful hiding-place for myself, and want to try it."

"We have lost one man," said Knight; "but if you will look out carefully, that no one comes behind, I think that I can turn out Shepherd. I know where Price is, for I saw him put out his head to look after George; but I would not speak, because we can have him out at any time, and he cannot catch us in a fair run."

So he went off, very cautiously, and when some distance from his fellow-players was recalled by the word "Home!" On turning round, he saw Shepherd running towards the "home," and found that he could reach it first. He was then evidently lost, for Shepherd was waiting at the "home" for him. So he went up to the spot where Price was hiding, called out, "I spy!" and ran home, having still a faint hope that he might be able to reach it by some craft.

But Price, who was a good player, although a small boy, placed himself in a position by which he must pass, if he tried to escape from Shepherd; and so Knight was captured.

"Now, then," said Jackson, "we must take care

what we do, for Masterman is very clever at hiding, and we cannot afford to lose another man."

So he placed Miller, Wilson, and Tom in such positions that they could see for some distance in every direction, and gave them instructions to keep a careful watch.

"Masterman cannot run as fast as you can," observed Tom.

"No," replied James, "but he hides so cunningly that I fear him more than even George. Last year he caught me by burying himself under a whole heap of fagots, and just leaving a little hole masked by a piece of stick. As I passed by, he darted out his hand and touched my foot. Now watch carefully!"

James then started on his search; and after being absent for some time, returned alone.

"Cannot you find him?" asked the boys.

"No," said James, "I knew that he had some good hiding-place when he called 'No!' for he generally hides very quickly. I shall go again."

Presently he was heard shouting "I spy!" and running hard for "home." But no Masterman followed; and after James had reached the "home," he went off with the other boys; for they were curious to know where the

boy had hidden himself. As they went, they met Masterman, who began to laugh as soon as he saw James.

"How did you find me?" he asked.

"Why, I thought that it was remarkable that a sack of potatoes should breathe," answered James; "and that was the reason why I poked it with the hoe, for I knew your tricks."

"Well," replied Masterman, "you need not have done it so hard, for you gave me such a push that it tumbled me over. I could not get up at first."

The fact was, that he had seen several sacks of potatoes lying in a corner of the tool-house, and had got into an empty sack, in order to delude an unwary seeker into the idea that he was only potatoes.

It was now the time of James and his party to hide, which they did with much success, for they touched four of the opposite side, and had their hide a second time.

A few days afterwards the rain began to fall heavily, and the boys were rather at a loss for new games. While they were deliberating one day, James said that he would go and ask his brother Edward to come and help them to something.

In a few minutes he returned, accompanied by his brother.

"Why do not you repair your kites?" said he, when he had learned their difficulty; "or why not make some new ones? Tom White has none, and he may as well learn."

"I want to know how to make a kite," said Tom.

"Very good, then; run over to the barn, and take with you as much string as you have, while I see about the rest of the materials."

In a quarter of an hour, Mr. Benson entered the barn, carrying with him four or five large newspapers, a paste-pot, and brush, and a basket containing a bradawl or two, and a few other tools.

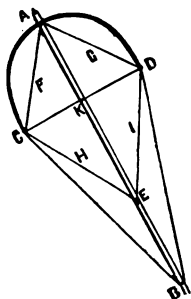
"The barn is a capital workshop," said he, "especially for kite-making; as we can lay everything flat on the floor without being cramped for want of room."

"Edward!" remarked George, "you promised to show us how to make a cloth-kite, and a hawk-kite; can you do so now?"

"Let me show Tom White, first, how to make a common paper-kite, and then we will have a cloth-kite, and an 'officer' and a 'hawk.' While I am

teaching Tom, employ yourselves in taking to pieces that old umbrella, which you will find in my room."

So he called Tom to him, and made him paste together two of the newspapers, so that they made one very large sheet. He then proceeded to make the frame-work, or skeleton of the kite, in the way represented in the engraving.



A is a good lath, about four feet long, or even longer, if wished. CD is a piece of willow, or cane, or a narrow hoop, which is firmly tied by its middle to the lath A, about an inch from the top, which is *pointed*.

This is then bent over, and fastened firmly by string to the point of the lath marked *k*. The hoop must be cut of just such a length that the distance from *c* to *d* is one-third the length of the upright lath.

The point *e* is at one-third the length of the lath from the bottom ; and when strings are fastened to it from *c d*, together with the other strings represented in the engraving, the skeleton of the kite is complete.

It must be remembered, that these strings must be fine, but strong ; as they might make the kite too heavy if they were thick, or snap under the very great pressure of the wind if not sufficiently strong.

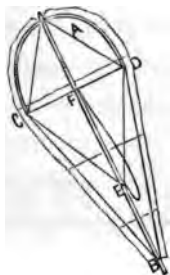
The lower end of the lath is to be sharpened like the top ; and then the framework must be balanced, or the kite will not fly at all.

This is easily managed. The frame is simply rested against a wall at an angle of 45° or so ; and then it will be seen if either side is too heavy. If such is the case, the hoop should be carefully deprived of some of its substance, until both sides are brought even.

"Now," said Mr. Benson, when he had balanced the framework to his satisfaction, "bring the paper and the paste, and we will soon cover it."

He then spread the paper on the ground, and laying

the kite-frame upon it, drew a line round the skeleton, so as to mark out a kite about four inches wider every way than the skeleton, as is seen in the accompanying engraving.



After cutting out the marked piece of paper, he proceeded to turn the edge of the paper over the string, and to fix them firmly with the paste ; and five minutes sufficed to complete the kite.

“There,” said he, “we have our kite ; but we must not be content with seeing it lie on the floor. We must make it fly ; so while the paste is drying, let us set to work at the tail.”

So he took some stout string, and measured off a *piece* fifteen times the length of the kite. In the

meanwhile, some of the boys had been making up a huge paper tassel, which he fastened to one end of the string, the other being tied firmly to the lath at B. Lastly, he bored two holes through the upright at the points E and F; and, passing a string through them, as seen in the engraving, he tied its ends into firm knots, so that it could not be pulled through again. This string is called the belly-band.

"Where are the wings?" asked Tom, who had watched the process with great interest; "and are you not going to put any of those cross-papers on the tail that I have often seen on kites?"

"Certainly not," said Mr. Benson; "if the kite is properly balanced, you do not require wings; and those papers on the tail are constantly getting entangled, and waste valuable time in unravelling them."

By the next day the kite was quite dry, and the party went out to try it, the rain having ceased.

A large ball of string had been previously purchased and wound on a stick, as thereby a better hold is given for the hand. One end of this string was fastened to the belly-band; and Mr. Benson, taking the string in his hand, and delivering the kite to George, walked

off about fifty yards against the wind, unwinding it as he went.

George now held the kite in the air, after seeing that its tail was laid straight and smooth down on the ground ; Mr. Benson ran away as fast as he could, and as the kite rose, he gradually let out more string.

There was a capital breeze, and the kite rose rapidly, string being given as required. At last the whole of the string was taken out, and the kite had attained a great height.

"Now, Tom," said Mr. Benson, "come and take the kite yourself."

So Tom took in his hand the stick to which the string was fastened, and was nearly lifted in the air by it.

"Take care," said Mr. Benson, "and don't be carried away."

"I had no idea that it would pull so hard," said Tom ; "it quite tires my arms."

"Give it me, then," said Mr. Benson, "and we will tie it to this post ; when it may pull as hard as it likes."

"Did not I once hear you say that carriages have been *drawn by kites* ?" said George, who was standing by.

"Yes," answered his brother ; "it was proved that the force of a large kite was so great that the carriage went at a speed equalling that of a vehicle drawn by horses."

"They could not have travelled on roads," said George ; "for the kites surely could not be made to go in the direction of the road."

"Indeed they did," said Mr. Benson ; "and very ingeniously it was managed."

"Besides the ordinary strings that attached the kites to the carriage, two very slight and very strong lines were attached to the outer rim of each kite, and brought within reach of the travellers. Then, by pulling either of the lines, they could turn the kites at an angle, and make them travel in a direction sufficiently near that of the vehicle for practical purposes. The carriage itself was steered by a wheel in front, like the perambulators of the streets."

"I wish that we had more string," observed Tom ;
"I want to see the kite go higher."

"It would not be much use if you had it," answered Mr. Benson ; "for the kite has already quite as much weight of string as it can bear, and if you were to lengthen the string, the kite would sink in proportion."

"What limit is there to the height to which a kite can attain?" asked James.

"Hardly any," said his brother, "if you manage properly. One kite will only reach a certain height, and carry a certain amount of string. But if you take a second kite, tie the string of the first to it, and then set it flying, *both* will rise, and so you gain all the height of the string of your second kite.

"Then, if you like, you may send up a third in like manner; only the pull of the three would be so great that it would be hardly possible in practice—that is, if the kites are of any size."

"How pretty the tassel looks," said one of the boys; "for we cannot see the string; and it looks as if it were floating in the air by itself. And how it flashes in the sun! Why is that?"

"Because, after the tassel had been placed on the ground ready for a start, I fastened to it a number of strips of scarlet tinsel, which reflect light beautifully. Wait until I make a 'soldier' kite, and then you will see what tinsel can do."

After the boys had been flying their kite for some time, the sky became overcast; and, as a shower was *evidently* near, they hauled in their line as fast as

they could. But long before they could draw it to the ground, the rain had begun to fall sharply, and the kite fell on the wet grass. When the boys picked it up, they found it entirely destroyed, for the soaked paper had burst in several places, and the paste had dissolved away. Great were their lamentations over their perished toy, as they stripped off the wet paper, and conveyed home the empty frame.

However, Mr. Benson told them not to trouble themselves, for he had a better kite at home, which he would show them.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CLOTH KITE—HOW ROLLED UP—MAKING THE CLOTH KITE—THE “OFFICER” KITE—PAINTING THE UNIFORM, AND GILDING THE ORNAMENTS—USE OF VARNISH—FLYING THE “OFFICER”—TYING A WEAVER’S KNOT—HOW TO RAISE A KITE—“MESSENGERS”—FIREWORKS ALOFT—THE “HAWK” KITE—ITS CONSTRUCTION—THE BOYS BROUGHT TO A STAND-STILL—FLYING THE “HAWK”—THE RUFFLING OF ITS WINGS.

AFTER they reached the house, the boys claimed the fulfilment of his promise; and he went off to his own room. Presently he returned, bearing in his hand something which looked like a thin roll of linen, about six feet long.

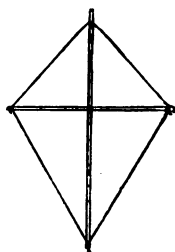


“There, boys,” said he, “that is a much more convenient kite to carry than the common form.”

“*That* a kite!” exclaimed one or two of the boys.

“Yes,” said he, laughing, and unrolling it; “that’s a kite. Now, see how I manage it.”

So saying, he spread the linen on the floor, and showed them that there was a long lath in the centre of the linen, and a shorter one that had been rolled up with it. He then showed the boys that there were two sockets at the opposite corners, into which he inserted the ends of the short lath, and tied it all firm. Then, fastening the two laths where they crossed each other, the kite appeared of the shape here shown.



“There,” said he, “wind and rain will not injure that kite, for there is not a particle of paste, paper, or glue about it; and it is very convenient to carry, for when you have finished flying it, you merely slip out the cross lath from the sockets, roll them up in the linen, and tie them round with the tail. Silk is better

than linen for the kite, but it is rather expensive, unless you can get hold of an old silk dress and sew it together neatly."

"Will you tell us now how to make the 'officer' kite?" asked Tom.

"Not yet," said he; "I am getting the materials ready for him, as we shall want rather a large supply."

Some days afterwards, he called the boys into his own room, and there they saw, extended on the floor, a huge linen kite, some seven feet in length.

"What a kite!" exclaimed they, as they entered.

"That is going to be the 'officer,'" said Mr. Benson, "and I want you to help me to carry it into the barn, where I shall paint and finish it, for paint and varnish are not very agreeable in my own room."

So three of the boys lifted up the great linen kite, and carried it into the barn, where they laid it on the floor, awaiting the coming of Mr. Benson, who soon made his appearance, carrying in his hands various brushes and pots, and a great roll of paper containing tinsel.

"Now, boys," he said, "I am going to make quite a gorgeous 'officer' of him. He will be rather stout, and,

perhaps, a little too high-shouldered ; but we won't be too particular."

With these words, he took a piece of thin board, and nailed it on the central lath so as to make the cap. Having done so, he took the black paint and covered the cap with it. He then proceeded to daub a great bearded face on the body of the kite, and to work out the limbs of the soldier, and make him a pair of black boots.

"He is standing at 'Attention,'" said he ; "you see I have not drawn his features very delicately, because the height will be so great that the coarsest and roughest work is the best. Now for the uniform.

"First we give him a beautiful scarlet coat."

So he proceeded to bestow the scarlet with a liberal hand ; and, having finished the coat, he gave his 'officer' a pair of very fresh cheeks and hands, leaving the trousers white. Having accomplished so much, he left the soldier to dry, and suspended his operations until the next day.

On the following morning, the boys, being anxious for the completion of the kite, ran off to the barn ; and, after trying the paint with their fingers, found it was quite dry.

Mr. Benson was summoned ; and, after proving to his own satisfaction that the paint really was dry, produced a great pair of scissors, and opening his roll of tinsel, began measuring and cutting.



“Hand me that varnish, George,” said he. “You see that I fasten the tinsel with varnish, and not with glue or paste. Varnish cannot be dissolved by water ; *and, as it is not likely to rain turpentine, we need not*

fear bad weather. There goes a splendid gold band round his cap, and another down the sides of his trousers. Press them down, George and James, while I cut out his sash and belt."

"It keeps curling up!" said James.

"So it will until the varnish is moderately dry. Keep rubbing it down with anything smooth, and it will hold fast enough in a few minutes."

And it did as he said; so that by the time that the sash and belt were cut out, the boys were at liberty to fasten them down in the same manner.

"I shall put on his epaulettes myself," said Mr. Benson, "and the star, and the gold ball on his cap; while you may cut out and fix his cuffs."

So in a quarter of an hour or less, the uniform was complete, and the "officer" looked quite magnificent.

"Why have you given his star only six points?" asked James. "Ought it not to have eight or ten, at least?"

"It would be more accurate, certainly," answered his brother; "but we must make allowance for distance; and if we were to give him so many points, you would not be able to see any points at all. Now take him out of the barn, and prop him up against the wall, so that

I may see him from a distance and find out any alterations that are necessary."

He then walked away about a hundred yards ; and, when he returned, he took the black paint, and—to the boys' astonishment—made the great eyes nearly as large again, and exaggerated the features to such an extent that they could not help laughing whenever they looked at him.

The inspection being completed, the kite was taken into the barn again, and left to dry.

When it was dry and ready for use, it was transported into the fields, and two great balls of thick string wound on two sticks. The wind was favourable—not too strong—and the "officer" ascended in grand style. When he reached some height, the first ball of string was exhausted, and Mr. Benson called to his brother to tie the two pieces firmly together.

But when the knot passed through his hands, he uttered an exclamation, and drew the string back again.

"What were you thinking of, George," said he, "to tie two strings together in this fashion? Do not you see that they pull *across* each other?—and when *there is* such a strain as is caused by this great kite,

they will soon cut each other ? This is the way to tie strings together firmly."

So he untied the knot which George had made, which was the common knot used for such purposes, and then proceeded to join the two strings in a weaver's knot.

This being done, he took the string from the hands of the boys who had been holding it, and gradually let it unwind, the soldier-kite rising gently.

When all the string was out, the boys rather complained that the kite was too far from them, and that it ought to be more immediately above them.

"Yes," said Mr. Benson ; "but it is easily made to rise. James, can you remember how to do so ?"

"By pulling the string at intervals, I think," answered James.

"Right," said his brother : "look !"

So the string was alternately pulled and released, and the kite rapidly rose.

"There is only one fault in it," said Mr. Benson ; "it does not fly sufficiently upright. We must give it twenty feet more of tail, and a heavier tassel. Now, let us send up a messenger with a word of command."

So he cut out a circular piece of pasteboard, and

pierced a circular hole in the middle. Then he cut four slits in it, about half-way from the circumference to the centre, and twisted the pieces sideways so that they formed four sails, on the principle of those of a windmill. He then slipped the end of the string through the centre of the pasteboard, and pushed it along the string as far as he could.

Presently it began to spin round, and, as it spun, to ascend. When it had reached about half-way along the string it made a halt, and revolved without advancing any farther.

"Why is it stopping?" asked Tom.

"I think that it has hitched in the knot," replied Mr. Benson; "but we will soon get over the difficulty." So he jerked the string rather violently; and the messenger shot over the obstacle, and continued to rise until at last it was stopped by the belly-band.

All the boys were loud in their praise of their kite, whose glittering costume sparkled in the sun, and flashed as if it were studded with diamonds, and not with mere tinsel. And from the great height to which it attained, it was visible for many miles around, and caused quite a sensation in the neighbourhood.

After the "officer" had finished his flight, he

was carefully brought to the ground and carried home.

"It is very pretty," said Mr. Benson, "to send up a kite like this at night, with a lantern tied at the end of the tail, and a supply of fireworks with a slow match ; but there is some danger in it, as the kite might fall from any accident, and the lantern set fire to a rick. But some evening we will go down to the coast, when the wind blows seaward, and let our ' officer ' soar over the sea, with his lantern and fireworks ; so that, if the string breaks, we shall only lose the kite, and do no damage—except, perhaps, deluding the Prevention officers into the idea that it is a smuggling-signal."

"You were telling us of a hawk-shaped kite," said George ; "will you show us how to make one?"

"Next wet day will be a good time for it," replied Mr. Benson. "Have you taken the umbrella to pieces?" George said that he had done so, but that he could not see how a kite was to be made out of an umbrella.

"The task is not very difficult," replied his brother. "But you should see the kites that they make in China. That is the country for kites. On a favourable day, the sky may be seen filled with the most fantastic shapes ; fish, dragons, birds, and human figures of all

kinds being constructed on the kite principle, and sent aloft."

The boys were all anxious to possess a new description of kite; and, when the first wet day came, they claimed Mr. Benson's promise.

"I thought that you would not forget," he said, "and I have drawn out a little sketch of the kite in question. Here it is."

"A A are two of the whalebone ribs of an umbrella; or, if you want a larger kite, make them of strong but flexible wood. C is the body of the kite, best made of very thin wood, with a stronger piece run down the centre, which is marked by the



dotted lines. B B are two thin laths, screwed or nailed firmly to the centre of the body at one end, and the other end attached to the two whalebones. These laths are used to counteract the force of the wind, and must be

very carefully proportioned and balanced, or the kite will not fly at all. The tail may be made of paste-board. The view that is here given is that of the back of the kite. The wings themselves are made of silk, which you get from the umbrella, and are not stretched quite tight, but very nearly so. Now, do you think that you can make the kite?"

"I don't know," said James. "Will you make it for us?"

"No," said Mr. Benson; "I have no time just at present, and you ought to learn to make these things for yourselves. Do your best, and then let me see it."

So the boys went off to the barn, and were soon busy at work with their tools. They got on merrily, and were just about to fit on the wings, when James suggested that they should prove the balance of the skeleton before completing it. This they did, and found that one side was much heavier than the other, and that the two wings were not precisely alike. The error was soon rectified, and then the wings had to be covered.

"Now," said George, "who knows how to hem?"

None of them had ever learned that art; and they

were reduced to carry the unfinished kite to the house, and ask the help of the servant.

“What is the matter there?” asked Mr. Benson, out of his window.

James explained that the hawk had come to a standstill for want of wings.

“What a set of useless boys!” exclaimed his brother. “Bring it up here.”

So they carried the framework and the silk up to his room, much wondering whether *he* could hem.

Their doubts were soon settled; for, producing from a box a needle, silk thread, and a thimble, he set busily to work at the wings, and in half-an-hour had sewn them on quite firmly.

“Where did you learn that accomplishment?” asked George. “I never knew that you could handle a needle before.”

“I learned it when I was laid up with a damaged foot,” replied he. “Sometimes I got tired of reading, and so I thought that I would take the opportunity of learning to sew in all its branches. I always do learn everything that comes in my way, and it is sure to be useful at some time. There is our kite complete.”

“Now,” continued he, “you see that I put the belly-

band, if we may call it so, very high—the upper part of it being fixed on the spot where I have made a round dot; and we must obtain its balance before we fix the other end."

"Let us fly it now!" said one of the boys; "there is no rain now."

"How is the wind?" asked Mr. Benson.

"It's a beautiful wind," said they; "rather stronger than when we sent up our 'officer.'"

"Then it will not do," said Mr. Benson; "for the wind should be very gentle for a kite of this kind. You must remember that the hawk-kite does not ascend in a straight line like the common kite, but makes continual sweeps through the air, just as a hawk does; and, at a little distance, a well-made kite of this description looks so much like a hawk, that it would deceive almost any one. If the wind is too high, the kite makes rapid and wide sweeps, and will very probably strike against the ground, and break itself to pieces. We must wait."

So they, rather unwillingly, hung up the kite, and waited as patiently as they could for a favourable day. When one did occur, they were surprised to find that the kite soared so easily, and did not require them to run in raising it, as the other kites did.

“What a ruffling its wings make!” said Tom, in great admiration; “it sounds just as if the kite were alive.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Benson, “that is partly the reason why the silk of the wings was not drawn tightly over the frame. Now go away a hundred yards or so, and see how exactly it resembles a real bird.”

Accordingly, they went away as they were directed, and were very much pleased to see how it soared and swept the air with its wings, just as if it had life.

Ever afterwards, the hawk-kite was their favourite, even after the “officer” had made a night-ascent with his lantern, and discharged a quantity of fireworks.

CHAPTER XII.

QUOITS—PITCHING THE “HOBBS”—HOW TO HOLD THE QUOIT—
HOW TO COUNT—TURNING TURTLE—“RINGING” THE QUOIT—
HOW TO THROW THE QUOIT—THE QUOITS NUMBERED—WEIGHT
OF QUOITS—“HOPSCOTCH”—MAKING THE HOUSE—PITCHING
AT THE PLUM—RULES OF THE GAME—HOW TO PLAY THE
GAME.

“WHAT is all this clinking about?” asked Tom, as Seymour approached, striking against each other two heavy iron rings, and followed by some of the other boys doing the same thing.

“These are our quoits,” answered Seymour. “Did you never see them before?”

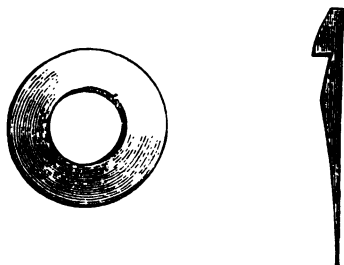
“No,” said Tom, “and I never even heard of them. How heavy they are!” he continued, taking one out of Seymour’s hands.

“Too heavy for you, or for Price,” answered Seymour; “and possibly for Wilson too. But ‘Quoits’ is a capital game, and you may as well look on as we play, and learn how to manage it yourself. You will soon be strong enough to throw them. Come and look at us.”

"Who are going to play?" asked Tom.

"James, Jackson, Knight, and Miller are going to play on one side against George, Williams, Shepherd, and myself. Masterman has gone home, and so you may as well take his quoits and practise, holding and throwing them as you see us. Here is the place where we play."

"Make haste, Seymour!" said Williams; "we have been waiting for you. Where are the 'hobs'?"



"Here," said Seymour, handing two iron pegs to him. Williams gave one of them to James, who drove it into the ground, and picking a hole in an old envelope, placed it over the peg. In the meantime Williams had measured off eighteen paces, and was driving the second peg or "hob" into the ground in like manner. Each of the boys then took a pair of quoits, and stood by the

first "hob." They then began to pitch the quoits towards the second "hob," taking care to throw them so as to make them stick in the ground.

Tom noticed that they did so, by holding the quoit so that the thumb was on its upper surface, the forefinger along its edge, with its tip just fitting into a little notch that he found there, and the other three fingers grasping it. When he made a few casts himself, he found that the quoit went through the air very unevenly, and wavered in its passage. But, after watching the players more carefully, he found that they made the quoit spin on its centre, and so kept it steady.

"How do you count?" asked he, after he had watched their playing for some time.

"The quoit that remains nearest the 'hob' counts one," said James.

"So I thought," answered Tom. "But, just now, Seymour's quoit was much nearer to the 'hob' than yours, and yet you counted one, and not Seymour."

"That was because his quoit was turned the wrong way upwards," said James. "Quoits are like turtles; their upper sides are round, and their lower are flat; and if they are turned with their flat sides upwards, they are useless."

"You counted two for yourself, a little while ago," said Tom. "I thought that the nearest quoit only counted one."

"True," replied James; "but then *both* my quoits were nearer than those of any other boy, and so I counted them both. And so with the sides, if all the quoits of my side were nearer the 'hob' than any of those belonging to the other side, we should count them all, and mark ourselves eight. But if, for example, all the quoits of our side had been pitched nearer than seven of the other side, all depends upon the last quoit. If it is pitched just outside one of our party's quoits, but inside the other seven, it cuts out the seven, and we only count one. Now it is my turn to pitch."

Presently, George shouted, "Hurrah!—Game!"

"How is that?" asked Tom. "You only gain one, for Knight's quoit is quite close to the 'hob!'"

"Ah!" replied George, "but just look *how* these two are placed! Don't you see that his quoit is sticking in the ground close to the 'hob,' but mine has fallen exactly over it, and the 'hob' is sticking up through the middle of the quoit. That is what is called 'ringing' the quoit, and it gives us the game."

"Now that the game is over," said Tom, "will you

show me how to throw a quoit? I have been trying, but it won't stick in the ground, and generally turns over."

"Let me see how you manage it," replied George, "and then, perhaps, I can tell you where you are wrong. Ah, that's it!" he continued, as Tom pitched a quoit; "you throw it too much with your hand, instead of with the swing of the whole arm from the shoulder; and then, when it touches the ground, it is carried forward by its force, and of course turns over."

"It looks so easy," said Tom, "I thought that I could do it without any practice."

"Never mind," answered George, "practise away; and you may as well have some games at short distances with Price and Wilson, each counting for himself."

"There is one more question that I want to ask," said Tom. "How do you make sure of your quoit in playing? There are sixteen all sticking in the ground now, and they are so much alike, that you must make mistakes."

"Not so fast, White," answered George, pulling up one of the quoits, and pointing to a mark upon it. "What is that?"

"It looks like the number 7," said Tom.

"It is the number 7, and its companion is marked also with a 7, so that we know the pairs to a certainty. You see, it would be very awkward if we did not know them, because they are not all of the same weight. Edward's quoits are nearly double the weight of ours, and even ours have a difference of a pound or more."

"What enormous quoits those must be of your brother's!" said Tom.

"No, they are no wider than ours; but they are double the thickness. It was an idea of his own; he had them made on purpose. If anything, they are not quite so wide as ours are, and so they contain great weight in a small compass. He had also a steel edge run round them, so that they cut into the ground wonderfully. You should just hear what a 'thud' they make when they come down."

"But can he throw them as far as eighteen paces?" asked Tom.

"Indeed he can, and further too. I have often seen him play a match, and win it, at thirty yards; and he does it so easily, that you cannot tell where the force comes from. He says that he likes the heavy quoits, and that he cannot play steadily with such light ones as ours; though they are not at all lighter than the

general run. Now we must come in, for there is the bell."

"Now we'll have a game at 'Hopscotch,'" cried Price, as they entered the barn on one rainy morning. "There are only you and I here to-day, for the other boys are busy with their mathematics, and we have full an hour to ourselves."

"I have seen boys, and girls too, playing at it," said Tom White; "but I don't know what the game is. They seem to kick an oyster-shell or a piece of tile about, but it does not look much of a game."

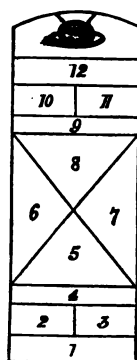
"It is a game, though, and we have rules for it. It will just come in nicely this wet morning, because we can play on the boards. Dr. Benson will not let us play at it on the stone flags, because it wears out our shoes so much."

"I should like to learn the game," answered Tom, "if you will show me how it is played."

"Where is the chalk that we had for the marbles?" said Price. "Oh, here it is on the beam. Now, look here!" said he, drawing on the floor the accompanying diagram.

"First, I draw a round plum-pudding in a dish. There is a knife and fork, and here is one big plum

in the middle. Now, I draw an arch over the pudding, and divide this great oblong figure, or house, as we call it, into twelve compartments or beds. And here is a star at the bottom."



"But," asked Tom, "where is our oyster-shell to kick?"

"Here is a better thing than an oyster-shell," answered Price; and he picked up out of a corner a nearly round flat stone, about two inches in diameter.

"Now we must take each of us a penny-piece, and pitch it at the plum,—something like quoits, you know,—and the one who is nearest goes in first. Here are two pennies."

So they proceeded to pitch at the plum; at the very edge of which Price's penny rested.

"I shall have first innings," said he. "Oh, what a shame!" he exclaimed; for Tom's penny struck his own, and driving it far away from the plum, remained in the same spot. "It is your first innings."

"What am I to do?" asked Tom.

"First, you must stand with your foot on the star,

and pitch the stone into bed No. 1. That's right. Now, hop into the bed, and kick out the stone past the star. No! not that way," said he, as Tom, standing on his right foot, kicked the stone with his left. "You must make a kind of hop at the stone, and drive it out with the same foot. Try again."

So Tom tried his fortune a second time, and succeeded.

"Now, pitch it into No. 2, kick it into No. 1, and then out by the star.—That's quite right. Now, throw it into No. 3, kick it into No. 2, then into No. 1, and then out. Ah! *you* are out too."

"Why am I out?" said Tom.

"Because you put down your other foot," answered Price. "There is only one part of the game where you may do that. Now I go in."

He then took his turn; and, after getting as far as No. 6, exclaimed, "Out I go!"

"Why?" said Tom.

"Don't you see that the stone is lying *upon* the line between 6 and 7?"

"Does that put you out, then?"

"Yes; we are out if either the stone or any part of the foot rests on any line, or if the stone is kicked into

the wrong compartment, or if it is sent out of the house altogether. Now, go in."

Warned by these remarks, Tom tried again, and got the stone safely into the seventh bed.

"Now, you may rest," said Price. "You must hop into No. 7 after the tile, and then put down your other foot in No. 6."

"I am very glad of it," said Tom; "for I was getting quite tired. I thought that 'Hopscotch' was a much easier game than it is."

"Are you rested?" said Price, after Tom had stood for a minute or two with his feet wide apart, like the Colossus at Rhodes.

"Ready," answered Tom.

"Then get on one foot again, and go on in a similar way through beds 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and then into the pudding-room. Ah! out you go. Now for me; and I mean to do it this time."

So he took particular pains; and, after a short rest at No. 7, got the stone into the plum-pudding room.

"Here I may rest again," said he.

"But is not that the whole game?" asked Tom.

"Not quite. Now, I have to put the stone on the

plum, and send it through the house until it comes out at the star. Here goes for a good hard kick."

"There! you have won the game," said Tom.
"Shall we have another?"

"I wish I *had* won it," answered Price. "Did you not see that I kicked the stone rather on one side,—because I wanted to send it so hard,—and it came out of the side of the house, just at the end of No. 2, instead of cutting through the line opposite the star."

"Then I have another chance yet," said Tom.

"Just as good a chance as I have, now," answered Price; "for I must begin afresh."

Accordingly, Tom took his station at the star, and got on famously, until he inadvertently put his foot on the cross wall between 10 and 11, and had to go out.

"Now," said Price, "I *will* win this game."

And he kept his word; for he took particular pains, and, in the last kick, sent the stone fairly through the house.

CHAPTER XIII.

"FIVES" — HOW TO BE INDEPENDENT — ROBINSON CRUSOE — THE "FIVES" GROUND — THE WALL AND BOUNDARY LINES — MEANING OF THE WORD "FIVES" — THE RACKET — RULES OF THE GAME — HOW TO COUNT — A HOT GAME — "CAT" — MAKING THE "CATS" — SEVERAL MODES OF PLAYING — RULES — MAKING A LARGE RING — HOW TO COUNT — "ROUNDER-CAT" — THE CAT'S CLAWS.

"It is getting quite cold, now," said James, one clear morning in the middle of October, "when this north wind blows so strongly. I want to have a good warming game. What shall we play at?"

Some of the boys suggested "Touch," others "Leap-frog," and others "Old Man;" but each proposition was rejected, because they had already played at those games.

"Why not 'Fives?'" said George, at last. "That will warm us well enough."

"Who are to play, though?" said James. "Tom White does not know the game, I am sure, and Price but very little of it. It will hardly be fair to cut

them out, and make them stand still in the cold wind."

"I don't mind standing still a little," said Tom, "if you will let me learn the game."

"Very good," said James. "Run and get your great-coat; for I will not let you stand and catch cold. We shall be ready when you come back."

Tom went off as fast as he could; and, having put on his great-coat, returned to the boys, whom he found standing before a high brick wall, with a smooth pavement in front.

"I knew that wall was for 'Fives,'" said he, when he reached his companions. "It was very kind of Dr. Benson to build it for you."

"So it was, indeed," said George. "We told him that if he would build the wall, we would manage the pavement ourselves."

"And did you pave this smooth ground?" asked Tom, looking with great admiration on the pavement, and with some awe upon the elder boys.

"To be sure we did. We paved it at the same time that we made the gymnasium, which you will be allowed to enter next year. Oh, we learn to do all sorts of things. Edward is always telling us to use

our own hands and brains. He says that they are quite as good as those of ordinary workmen, and that we ought to be as independent as possible of others. So, if we should happen to be wrecked, like Robinson Crusoe, we could build a house, and fortify it even better than he could ; for we learned something of fortification, though not much. I think that there is only one thing that he could beat us at, and that is making tobacco-pipes. But as we don't want to smoke, it is of no consequence."

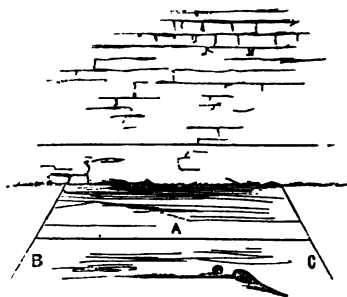
"And shall I learn all those things?" asked Tom.

"If you stay here long enough, you will," answered he.

"Aye," struck in James, "and we should beat our old friend in another way ; for he seems to have been a shocking bad cook, and could not do much except roast and boil. Now, we have learned to cook almost anything in all sorts of ways. We can pick up a capital dinner in the fields any day ; and we have been learning which plants are good for food, and which are injurious. You can't think how many good dishes can be made from eggs and a few herbs. Edward says that the amount of excellent food that is left to waste *is quite shameful.*

"However, I don't think that Robinson Crusoe played at 'Fives,' unless he taught Friday, and you won't play it either, unless I teach you.

"Now, just look at those lines which I have been drawing while you were away :—



"You see, I have drawn one line on the wall, just three feet from the ground, and of any length. This we will call the 'wall-line.' And here is another line, marked A. This is drawn exactly parallel to the wall, at a distance of ten feet. And, lastly, these two lines, B and C, are called the 'boundaries.'

"Now, to show you how the game is played, George and I will just play for a short time."

"Do not you use that curious battledore?" asked

Tom, who saw James take up the instrument and lay it aside.

"No," replied he: "at all events, not now. 'Fives' properly is played with the hand, and that is the reason why the game is called 'Fives.'"

"I don't see that," said Tom.

"I should wonder if you did," answered James. "See,—you have four fingers and a thumb on your hand, and that makes five: and in society that is not particularly refined, the closed hand is called 'a bunch of fives.' So, you see, the ball ought to be struck with the 'Fives;' that is, with the hand."

"That is a funny reason," replied Tom, laughing, as he opened and shut his own hand several times. "But I want to know about that battledore."



"We call it a 'racket,' not a battledore," said James, "and it is made of a wooden handle and ring, the inside of the ring being filled up with crossed catgut strings. There is quite an art in tying the strings;

but Edward showed us how to manage it ; so that, if they become loose, or break, we can repair them ourselves, instead of sending them to the makers, who charge very heavily for the work."

"Why is the racket used?" asked Tom.

"The ball is rather hard," answered his instructor. "Feel it. Now, when you have been playing for some time, and have struck the ball with the hand, it becomes quite sore : so many players will not use the bare hand, but play with a racket. We only do so at intervals, when our hands are sore."

"Come," said George ; "do make haste and begin ; for I have no great-coat with me, and I am getting so cold."

"Very good, then," said James, taking the ball. "See here, White ; I strike the ball on the ground, and make it jump. Now, I shall begin to strike it with my hand, and drive it against the wall, above the wall-line, outside the line A, and within the lines B and C. Off we go."

He then proceeded to do as he had said, and the ball sprung back, falling some feet beyond A. George, on seeing the force with which it struck the wall, ran out, and as the ball bounded from the ground, struck it

with his open hand, and again sent it against the wall. James then took it up, and did the same thing, and the ball was thus kept in motion, until George drove it rather too much on one side, and it fell outside the lines B C.

"One for me!" cried James. "Now, George, you must strike the ball."

"Please stop a minute," said Tom; "I want to ask one or two questions."

"Ask away!" said the two players.

"Well, then; must the ball always fall outside the line A? I saw it fall inside it several times, and you did not say that you were out."

No," replied James; "after the ball has been started, it may fall anywhere within the 'boundaries,' provided that it goes above the 'wall-line.' "

"Then you ought not always to hit the ball hard?"

"That is just as you like. You see, if George happens to be standing close to the wall, I drive the ball as hard as I can, to make it bounce away far beyond him; and if he is away from the wall, I only just give it enough force to strike above the 'wall-line,' so that it drops close under the wall, and he has to run some distance to it. The great object of each player is

to make his opponent *miss* the ball, because he counts one every time that his adversary misses."

"Can more than two play at a time?" asked Tom.

"As many as like to play. They choose sides, and then disperse their men, some near the wall to catch the balls that fall near the wall, and others at different distances, so that they may be ready, at whatever spot the ball may alight. Anything more?"

"Please to play just a little longer," said Tom, "and then I shall understand better."

Presently James again cried "Out!"

"Why was that?" said Tom; "George did not miss the ball."

"It comes to the same thing, though," answered George; "for the ball had made two hops before I caught it; I had too far to run. Is there anything else that you don't understand?"

"Only one thing. You say that the ball must not make more than one hop before it is struck, or else you are out. But I just now saw James strike it, before it had made any hop at all; it did not even touch the ground. Is that right?"

"Right enough. The ball must not make more

than one jump, but it need not make any ; only, it *must* take the wall, above the ' wall-line.' "

" Now, White," said James, " I think that you can manage to play."

" I will try," answered Tom ; " but I am afraid that I shall play very badly."

" Never mind that ; you will play nearly as well as Price, I dare say ; and if not, you will soon learn. Go and fetch the others ; they are playing at ' Leap-frog ' in the field."

So Tom went after his schoolfellows, and after taking a jump or two at ' Leapfrog ' with them, he returned to the Fives'-ground. There they soon made up two sides, and matched Price and Tom against each other, putting them where the ball was in no great danger.

Tom found that if he played heartily at this game, it made him very hot indeed, and he was glad to have his great-coat ready to put on when it was over ; for he was rather liable to cold-catching.

" What *are* you making ? " asked Tom of Seymour ; who was busily employed with his pocket-knife and some pieces of wood. Several bits of wood, sharpened *at both ends*, were lying on the bench near him, and

their form may be seen in the accompanying engraving.



"Making 'cats,' " answered Seymour, cutting away vigorously.

"Cats?" said Tom; "cats! They don't look much like cats."

"I cannot say that there is much likeness," said Seymour; "but they *are* 'cats,' nevertheless; and I am making four or five ready for a game in the afternoon."

"Do you use all these in a game?" asked Tom.

"That depends on the kind of game. You may play at 'Cat' in several ways. But I am making these in case we should lose one; for in grass, or in a hedge, they are not easily found."

"I hope it is not such a hot game as 'Fives!'" said Tom; "for the weather is so much warmer just now."

"No," answered Seymour; "it is not a very warm game, and that is the reason why we shall have it to-

day. We always proportion our games to the weather as nearly as we can."

"But *how* do you play?" asked Tom; not losing sight of the chief point.

"Simply enough. It may be a kind of 'Trap-ball, without either a trap or a ball; or it may be a kind of 'Rounder;' or it may be played in half-a-dozen different ways. But these two are the best, and we do not use any other. Have you a wooden hoop-stick?"

"Yes; one or two," answered Tom.

"Very good, then; fetch one, and come to the field, and I will show you how we play. The chalk is in the barn, I suppose."

When Tom returned, bearing his hoop-stick, he found all the boys assembled in the field, each with a stick. On the ground was a small space, from which the grass had been cut; and round this spot, which was about the size of a cheese-plate, a circle was drawn, about twenty feet across.

"How did you make such a beautiful ring?" said Tom. "It is too large to make by the feet, as you showed me in the barn."

"It is even easier than that," said George. "Look *here*."

Tom saw then that a long string was in George's hand.

"See," continued George ; "all I have to do is to drive a peg into the middle of this clear spot ; then I hitch over it the loop at one end of this string, and take the other end in my hand, together with the chalk. Then, by pressing the chalk on the ground, at the full stretch of the string, and walking slowly round, I get a capital circle. Now, as you see, we have pulled up the peg, levelled the ground where it was, and just mark the spot with the chalk."

"Shall we begin to play now?" said one of the boys.

"Which way?" said another.

"I will tell you what we will do," answered George. "We will have three trap-games, and then three rounder-games."

"Now, White," said Seymour, "you will learn in two minutes how to play at 'Cat.' You see that if I hit either end of the 'cat' with the stick, it jumps into the air ; then, before it falls, I hit at it. If I miss it twice, I am out ; or if I don't drive it out of the ring.

"Then, if it is sent outside of the ring, one of the

opposite party takes it, and pitches it as near the centre as he can. I wait with my stick, and hit at it, trying to drive it away the second time.

"If he makes it fall in this cleared space, I am out; but if not, I measure with my eye, and call the number of stick-lengths from the centre of the circle."

"That is just as we do at 'Trap-ball,'" interposed Tom.

"Just so; and if I guess too many, I am out; and if I guess within the number, I count them all."

"That is easy enough," said Tom, "and I think that I can play with you at once."

"You had better practise a stroke or two with a cat," said James; "it is not quite the same thing as a ball."

So Tom took a "cat" which Seymour gave him, and found that it was rather apt to rise too high, or not to jump at all. However, in a few minutes, he found that he must not let it rise very high, but just allow it to leap a few inches, and strike it smartly.

He then joined the players, and they finished their three games.

When those three were finished, they set to work to prepare the ground for the rounder-game.

For this purpose they adjourned to the spot where

they played "Rounders," and after making sure of the stations, divided again into parties. Those who obtained first innings sent one of their players to each station, while another took his place at the "home." All the players carried their sticks.

The feeder then took his place as in "Rounders," and pitched the "cat" to the striker. He struck the "cat" as far away as he could, and ran to the first station, while the others ran round from station to station, exactly as in "Rounders."

But they were not put out in quite the same way ; for as the "cat" was sharp at both ends, it might inflict a dangerous wound if thrown at the players. So it was thrown *across* them instead ; and if it crosses between a player running towards one of the stations, that player is out.

The wisdom of this change was well shown : for once, after George had struck the "cat," it was lost for a time, and thereby the players gained five : the boys searched for it, and at last it was discovered sticking firmly in the bark of a tree.

"There !" said James, when he pointed it out, "here is a warning for you to keep out of the way of the 'cat's' claws."

"How do you count in this game?" asked Tom.

"There are two ways. We may count by bats' lengths, as in 'Rounders,' or we may count one for every player that goes round all the stations and reaches the 'home.' We like the latter plan best, and always use it here."

CHAPTER XIV.

“FOX”—RULES OF THE GAME—TOM THINKS IT GREAT FUN—
HE CHANGES HIS OPINION—“BASTE THE BEAR”—HARNESSING
THE BEAR—SEYMOUR’S TRICKS—“HOCKEY”—THE HOCKEY-STICKS
—SETTING THE GOALS—RULES OF THE GAME—A GOOD BALL—
ARRANGING THE PLAYERS—STARTING THE BALL—BLISTERED
HANDS—BUYING EXPERIENCE.

“We have just half-an-hour for a game this morning, before the bell rings,” said James, as they left the breakfast-table. “Let us have a game at ‘Fox.’ It don’t require any preparation or choosing sides.”

“Now, White,” said Price; “you will find your ‘Hopscotch’ practice useful to you, for ‘Fox’ is mostly done by hopping.”

“Do we all hop then?” asked Tom.

“We may if we like,” answered Price; “but it would be rather silly, for it would let the ‘Fox’ catch us. Only the fox is obliged to hop, and all the others may run.”

By this time the party had arrived at the field; and George marked out a space at one end, which he called

"home," and having so done, volunteered to be "Fox."

All the boys then pulled out their handkerchiefs, and began knotting them at one end, George included.

"What have we to do now?" said Tom, for the knotted handkerchiefs made him feel rather uneasy.

"George has to hop after us, and we run away. We hit at him with our handkerchiefs, and he hits at us. If he can touch or strike any of us, that boy becomes 'Fox,' and runs 'home' while we baste him. And if 'Fox' puts down both feet, he must run 'home' in the same way, and be basted. It's great fun!"

Tom had his doubts, but did not like to show them. Presently George asked if they were all ready, and on receiving an answer in the affirmative, he hopped out of "Home," flourishing his handkerchief.

The other boys discreetly formed a circle round him; and, occasionally, one would rush by him and aim a blow in passing.

George, however, was generally too quick, although he received one or two blows. After a while, Seymour became so annoying, that George made a stroke at him, over-reached himself, and came with both feet on the ground. Away he ran to the "home," followed by all

the boys with their weapons. But he was too swift for them, and reached "Home" scatheless.

"Why did not you hit him, White?" said Seymour, reproachfully. "You were in a beautiful position, and could have fetched him *such* a cut. I wish I had been in your place!"

"I didn't like," answered Tom; "I was afraid that he would have hit me."

"But he could not do so then," said Seymour. "The 'Fox' may only hit as long as he is standing or hopping on one foot. Now he is safe; for we must not touch him as long as he has one foot within the 'home.'"

"I'll try to hit him next time, then!" said Tom.

"Oh!" replied Seymour, "I will tell you how to manage it. I will jump about in front of him and make him savage; then, while he is thinking about me, you can come quietly and catch him behind."

Which Tom did, and pronounced the game great fun. But, being encouraged by his good fortune, he became rash, and hoping for another chance, he was stopped by George, who delivered a back-stroke that just caught him on his outstretched arm.

Tom dropped his handkerchief, and showed symptoms

of crying, heedless of all the boys who were rushing upon him with their handkerchiefs.

"Don't hit him!" cried George; "he does not understand the game just yet. I say, White, next time that you are touched, you must run 'home' as fast as you can, or you will be battered tremendously."

"I did not think that handkerchiefs hurt so much," said Tom, half doubtful about crying, and not sure that the game *was* such fun, after all!

"Never mind it!" said James; "it was not very hard. I'll take your turn, and be 'Fox' for you this time."

Tom thanked him for his kind offer, which was a great relief to him, for the sight of all the knotted handkerchiefs waiting for him was not agreeable. So he took care to keep out of the way of the "Fox," and not to be too daring.

He found that if he took proper care it was a very amusing game, and that it taught him the advantage of discretion as well as of valour.

When the bell rang, the boys put their handkerchiefs into their pockets, and returned to school.

As they came out for their usual game before dinner, Seymour, who was a great favourer of any games

where the players had to be struck at with handkerchiefs, or thrown at with balls, or subjected to similar ordeals, suggested that it would be a pity to untie their handkerchiefs now that they were so nicely knotted, and proposed a game at "Baste the Bear."

"Very well," said James ; " I have a capital piece of string in my pocket. Who will be ' Bear ' ?"

Every one declined the honour, and it was unanimously agreed that as Seymour had proposed the game, *he* should be the first " Bear," and that James should be the " Bear-Keeper."

"What a shame !" exclaimed Seymour. " I wanted to see George as ' Bear,' and I would have had such beautiful cuts at him !"

"Would you ?" said George. "Very much obliged for your kind intentions ! So I would advise you to look out for yourself."

By this time James had fetched the chalk, and drawn a circle about five feet in diameter, in the middle of which Seymour knelt down, turning his jacket-collar over his ears, and tucking himself into as small a compass as possible. To his wrist was tied one end of a top-string, and James held the other in his hand.

Tom discreetly held aloof to watch the proceedings, having a wholesome dread of the handkerchief.

The boys then assembled round the "Bear" and his "keeper," and tried to strike, or baste the "Bear" with their handkerchiefs, while the "keeper" tried to touch one of them without loosing hold of the string, or pulling the "Bear" out of the ring. If either of these misfortunes happened, the "keeper" was basted instead of the "Bear," until matters were arranged afresh.

George was very assiduous in "paying his respects to the Bear," as he called it, but at last he paid the penalty by being touched.

"Hurrah!" cried Seymour. "Look out, Master George! for I have got you this time."

"No, you have not," answered George; "for I appoint you my 'keeper'!"

"Now that is too bad!" exclaimed Seymour. "I thought I had you fairly."

"Ah!" said George. "Do you think that I am not as sharp as you are? We know your tricks here!"

"Well," said Seymour, "you have beaten me this time, I confess; so I must make the best of it. Pull your cap well over your eyes; or you may chance to get an accidental blow in them."

Tom now thought that he would join the players; but he found that Seymour was a more dangerous "keeper" than James, although he was not so tall. For he was never still, and had a curious knack of jumping backwards, clear over the "Bear," by which he several times was very near catching the more adventurous players. So Tom kept aloof, until at last Jackson was touched by one of those back leaps.

Jackson then appointed George as his "keeper," and the game went on until Seymour was again made the "Bear," and had Jackson for his "keeper."

Tom now thought himself tolerably safe, and actually succeeded in hitting the "Bear" once or twice.

But Seymour did not trouble himself about such ignoble game; and, although he seemed to be quite covered up in his cap and collar, was secretly keeping a look-out on James and George.

This opportunity soon arrived, for while the "keeper" made a rush after George on one side, James thought that it was a good time to get a cut at the "Bear." He succeeded in hitting him; but, at that moment, Seymour flung himself forward, having his captive hand and one knee in the ring, and with the other hand caught James by the leg, and dragged him into the

ring before he could recover his balance. He then slipped the string from his own wrist on to that of James ; and, with a very low bow, installed him in his place.

" I ought to have known that," said James, " for you tried that plan with us last year. However, I don't get any basting this time, for there is the bell !"

" So it is," said Seymour ; " and I am sorry for it. I should have liked just to have had one cut at you ! Still you are ' Bear,' remember, next time we play !"

When the afternoon-school was over, Dr. Benson directed James to bring down the " Hockey " sticks from the garret, where they had lain during the summer. James left the room, and in a few minutes returned with two great bundles of sticks, about the length of walking-sticks, and each with a hooked top.

" That is right !" said the Doctor. " Take them out into the field, and I shall come and see you play."

So they started off, carrying the bundles of sticks ; and, when they reached the field, untied the strings, letting the sticks fall in a heap.

" Here's my stick !" said one ; " And here's mine !"

said another ; and in a very few minutes each boy was armed with a stick, which he seemed to handle as if it were an old friend.

"Now, White!" said James, "you may have your choice of these sticks; but let me advise you not to take a very large or a very small stick. Here is one that belonged to Poyning, and you can have that."

"What is this huge club for?" asked Tom, as he picked up a great stick, nearly as thick as a man's wrist, and having the curved end bound with very strong iron wire.

"That is Edward's 'Hockey' stick. It was a fancy of his to have the great big thing, and he used to stop us from hitting the ball with it. Look here, too," continued James, taking up a remarkably slender stick, not thicker than his little finger, and which bent and sprang in his hand as he shook it. "Here's another of Edward's 'Hockey' sticks, and I don't know which is the worst to contend against. In 'Hockey,' we have to drive a ball through a certain goal. So, when Edward uses this big stick, he takes both hands to it, and continues to trundle the ball under it in the most provoking way. We can't hit it,

because his stick is so big and heavy that it stops all our blows.

"Then, when he takes the little one, it is just as tiresome, for when we are driving the ball on beautifully, he darts in this little stick, and tips the ball just over our own sticks. Then he gives it a little hitch forward, and when we are hitting at it, he hooks it away just as our stick comes on it, and gets a sharp blow at it before we can get the stick ready for another stroke. So we don't let him play with us now, unless he lets us match two of our best players against him."

Just then, George came up, carrying in his hand two long rods of bramble, which he was sharpening at each end with his knife.

"How far shall the goals be?" said he.

"O, the same as usual, sixty yards."

So George stuck both ends of one of the bramble-rods into the ground, making it into an arch about three feet high. He then stepped off with long paces, and when he had counted thirty, stooped down, and drove a peg into the earth. Thirty more paces were then measured, and at the end of them another arch was made similar to the former.

"I think I know the game," said Tom ; "for I have often seen boys playing at it, although they did not use an arch as a goal."

"The arch is the safest goal that you can have," said James ; "because any one can see whether the ball passes through it ; whereas, if you only make a mark on a wall, or anything of that kind, there may be disputes."

"Then all we have to do is to drive the ball through our adversaries' goal, is it not ?"

"That is all that is to be done, but there are one or two rules as to the manner of doing it."

"1. Each player must have his right shoulder towards his own goal, and his left towards that of the opposite party.

"2. If he stands the contrary way, any one may hit him on the shin as a penalty ; or if he should goal the ball when standing on the wrong side, his own party lose the game.

"3. No player is permitted to raise the end of his stick higher than his shoulder, on pain of a similar penalty.

"4. The ball is not to be touched with the hand after it has been once thrown in the air."

"These rules," said James, "are intended to prevent accidents, which would be very likely to happen if the players were at liberty to stand where they liked, and strike with the swing of their arms. You will find in practice, that the most effective mode of playing is not to hit the ball hard, but to coax it, as it were, from among the enemy's sticks, and to get it gradually towards the goal. Then, a smart blow will often win the game."

"Where is the bung?" asked Tom.

"We don't use a bung here, or a ball," said George, who had now joined them, after completing his arrangements. "A bung is so apt to break to pieces."

"But the boys whom I saw playing, used to tie their bung round with string."

"O, you mean, by binding string across and across ; and making all the strings meet in the centre !"

"Yes, that is just the way."

"Well, it certainly makes the bung last longer ; but it always breaks up, sooner or later. Then, a ball is apt to fly too far, and sometimes hurts a player if struck smartly. You see, we can't keep a look-out for a ball, as we do at cricket, or trap, or any of those *games*, for the ball may be struck up just under our

feet, and then if it happens to hit our noses, it leaves anything but a pleasant sensation."

"Then, what *can* you have?" asked Tom. "You seem to have something very excellent."

"You are right there," said George; "it is very excellent. We have used it for three years constantly, and it would last for thirty. And only last year Edward struck it with all his power, and hit me in the mouth with it. Now, if it had been a ball, I should not have had a respectable tooth left; but, as it was what it was, it only made me feel rather queer, and gave me a swollen lip for a day or two. Edward did not even know that it had touched me."

"Do show me what it is, then!" said Tom, quite anxious to see this wonderful object.

"Go and ask my father," said James; "he has it in his pocket. It was his notion, and a capital one it has proved to be."

So off went Tom to the Doctor, who took from his pocket an India-rubber bottle deprived of its neck. Part of the neck had been flattened, and by means of heat, pressure, and a little ether, the hole had been stopped up with it.

Tom at once saw how admirably it was adapted for

the purpose, as it was nearly as round as a ball, could not be cut by stones, would float in water, and would not do any damage if it struck a player.

"Now we will begin," said James; "we have the same sides that we had before, so you are on my side. Knight is going to stand by our goal as a watchman, in order to prevent the ball from being sent through it when none of us are near. He is called the goal-keeper. I am going to stand nearly close to the starting-point, and you and Wilson must always keep somewhere between Knight and myself."

George had been making similar arrangements on his side. Williams was his goal-keeper, and he opposed James.

"What trouble you take about placing the players!" said Tom to Miller, near whom he was standing.

"It is half the game," said Miller, "to get them in proper order. Don't you see, that if there were no players on the opposite side, we should just pass the ball from one to the other, and lodge it in the other goal. So to stop that, George places his men in such a way that each of them is opposite one of us, and takes care that his opponent does not get the ball."

"Draw lots now for first throw," said James.

"No," replied Jackson ; "there is no fun in that. Let Dr. Benson throw it up for us, and then we shall not have to disturb ourselves."

On being asked, Dr. Benson acceded to their request, and taking the ball in his hand, walked to the spot where George had driven the wooden peg, and which was the central spot between the two goals.

After seeing that all the players were ready, he threw the ball high in the air, and retreated.

Down came the ball, and great was the clatter of sticks. Tom hardly knew where he was for the shoutings and the rattlings of the 'Hockey' sticks ; and the first game was won by his own side, without his even seeing the ball.

Again Dr. Benson was called upon to start the ball, and much the same scene took place.

But this time Tom was more wary, and once or twice succeeded in stopping the ball at a critical moment, when it seemed hopelessly in the power of their adversaries.

"Well played, White !" cried James, seeing Tom so busily engaged. "Don't be too eager !"

But Tom *was* too eager ; and, in five minutes, was so

entirely breathless that he could hardly stand, much less play.

Taking warning by this circumstance, he again entered the lists, and in the course of a few games began to play quite steadily.

When they had finished their games, and were returning home, Dr. Benson asked him what he thought of 'Hockey.'

Tom answered, that he thought it the hottest game he had ever played at, and that it was very exciting.

"So it is," said the Doctor; "and a most excellent game for cold weather. What is the matter with your hands?"

For Tom was rubbing his hands together, and looking rather in pain.

"I think it is the 'Hockey' stick, sir," said he; "it has made my hand quite sore. I did not feel it while I was playing, but it is getting quite painful now."

"You will soon conquer those little difficulties," said the Doctor. "Blisters always come at first, when your hand has not been used to such rough toys. You have yourself to blame, too, for you should not have flourished your stick about in that excited manner. Who was the best player there?"

"I think that James was, sir."

"Yes, you are right. Do not you remember how quietly he held his stick, and never used it unless it were wanted? However, we must all buy our experience, whether we are little boys or big ones."



CHAPTER XV.

**"FOOT-BALL"—INFLATING THE BALL—INDIA-RUBBER BALLS—
FILLING THE BLADDER—USING THE LACES—SETTING THE GOALS
--RULES OF THE GAME—THE BURST BALL—MENDING THE BALL
—A MONSTER GAME—CORK FOOT-BALL—A CLEVER PLAYER—
TRIUMPH OF THE WINNER—A CRUSHED FENCE.**

"WHAT an enormous ball you have there!" exclaimed Tom White; as he saw James dangling from the end of a piece of string, a leathern ball much larger than Tom's own head.

"That's our foot-ball," said James; "and we are going to have a game to-morrow."

"Then why do you bring it down now?" asked Tom, who was determined to learn everything about *the game*.

"Because it has not been used since last year ; and I must examine it to see that it is properly filled, and that there are no thorns in it."

"May I see how you get it ready ?" asked Tom.

"Yes, and you may possibly be useful. So come into the barn, and get a pail filled with water."

The water-pail was soon taken into the barn, and James, after laying a thick, wide, and smooth board on two trestles, put the pail upon it.

"Now," said he, "look at the ball. Do you see anything peculiar in the way that it is made ?"

"Yes," said Tom ; "there is a part of the ball that seems to be tied together something like the lacings of my thick boots."

"Now I shall undo the lace, and you will see that the leather is only a case, containing a bladder very tightly blown."

So he undid the string, and the ball gaped wide with a great orifice, from which James drew out a kind of leathern tongue, and then pulled out a bladder tied at the top, and very much shrivelled.

"I thought that it could not have held the air all this time," said James. "Now we have to blow it up again, and make it quite tight."

He then put case and bladder into the water ; and laid a stone upon them, to keep them under the surface.

"So far, so good," said he. "Now I wonder where our tobacco-pipes are !"

"You don't smoke?" exclaimed Tom, rather horrified.

"Not exactly," said James. "But, nevertheless, we use up a good many pipes in the course of the year. You see, we learn chemistry, and pipes are uncommonly useful then. Here's one that will just do, for it has lost its bowl already."

He blew through the broken stem to make certain that the passage was clear, and then went off to fetch some fine and strong twine.

By this time, the ball and bladder were tolerably well soaked.

"Now, White," said James, "you ought to learn how to do everything for yourself, and that is the reason why I am going to show you how to inflate a foot-ball. I know of more than one school where the boys were obliged to send their ball to the makers to have it freshly blown up almost every time that it was used."

"I have seen much better balls than these," said

Wilson, who had just joined them, "that don't require to be blown up. They are made of India-rubber, and covered with leather."

"I don't deny that they are cleaner balls to handle than this," said James; "but I quite deny that they are better balls; they look handsomer, it is true, but they are only fit to use on a perfectly smooth field where there is no danger of thorns or broken sticks."

"Why so?" asked Wilson.

"Because, if a thorn runs into them, the air escapes and they are quite useless. At all events, they must be sent back to the manufacturer; and as he lives in London, you may just as well buy a new ball. Now, if we run a dozen thorns into this ball, we can buy a new bladder for twopence; or if the wound is not very severe, we can sit down in the field, and mend it in twenty minutes."

"How *can* you mend a hole in that bladder?" asked Tom.

"Wait until it is required," said James, "and then I will show you. It is tolerably sure to get a thorn into it before we have had a couple of days' work. Now for the ball."

He then took the wet bladder out of the pail, and

pushing the piece of tobacco-pipe into the opening, he tied it firmly round with twine. He then blew into it until the bladder was distended with air ; and, when it was full, tied a second string just below the pipe-stem, so as to confine the air.

"That will never get into the ball," observed Tom ;
"it is nearly as big again as the ball itself !"

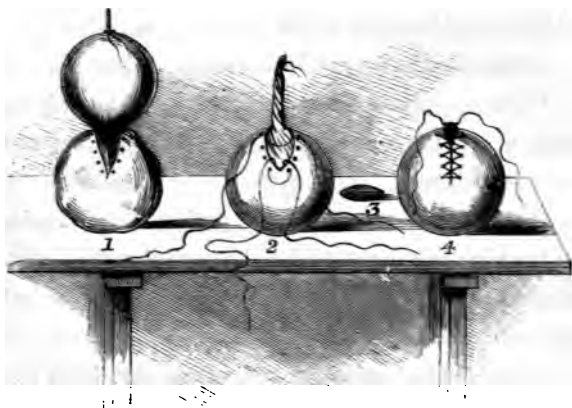
"We shall see," was the answer. "I am only trying now whether there are any holes in it."

After pressing and rolling it on the board for several minutes, he found that no air had escaped, and that he might put it into the ball. His next proceeding was to untie the neck-string, and to permit the air to escape, which he aided by pressure.

When all the air was forced out, he grasped the empty bladder, and by squeezing it in both hands, moulded it into a rudely cylindrical shape. He then pushed it into the leathern ball-case, through the opening ; and having done so, applied his lips to the end of the pipe-stem, and again filled the bladder with air.

As it was much larger than the ball, that portion of it which could not be contained within the case, escaped at the orifice ; so that the whole affair was something of the shape of a great hour-glass. When James had

forced in as much air as the bladder would hold, he again tied the neck-string. The shape of the ball at



this stage of the proceeding may be seen in No. 1 of the accompanying engraving.

Having untied the string that secured the pipe-stem, he withdrew it, and put it away for future use.

The ball was now ready for the next part of the operation.

Grasping the protruding portion of the bladder firmly in his hand, James began to twist it round, making it into a kind of screw, and gradually driving all the air

into the lower part of the bladder, where it was covered with the leathern case. In five minutes this had been achieved, and the ball rendered round and elastic.

This stage is shown in No. 2.

"Hand me the tongue," said James.

Wilson picked up the leathern tongue that was lying near, and which is marked No. 3 in the engraving, and gave it to James.

He then, with some difficulty, pushed the remainder of the bladder into the case, and pressing it down with his fingers, slipped the tongue between the bladder and the orifice of the leathern case.

"Now, White," said he, "you will see that I use two strings to lace up the ball with, for it saves one half the trouble. See, here is a lace with a tag at each end, which I pass through one or two of the top holes, and draw it tolerably tightly over the tongue, and tie it in a bow. This lace will hold the tongue in its place, while I set to work with the other string."

"I should not think that it would save very much trouble," said Tom.

"That is because you never blew up a football. If you don't have this second lace at the top, the tongue is always popping out at one end while you lace up the

other, and then out comes the screw, and you have all your work over again."

While speaking, James did not let his hands rest, but was busily lacing at the ball, as Wilson observed, just like a cobbler. This state of the ball is shown in No. 4, (page 215) the lacing being half completed.

"There!" cried James at last, as he dexterously wove the tags among the crossings of the lace, and then cut them off with his knife, "that's the way to blow up a football! See how it bounces!" And throwing it upon the floor, he proceeded to make it rebound several times, by striking it with his hand.

"What dirty hands you have, James!" said Tom, who was rather squeamish about soiling his fingers.

"Suppose I have," answered James; "water is cheap enough here, and in three minutes my hands will be as clean as yours. Come and pump for me, Wilson!" And within the three minutes, he laid his hands on those of Tom White, rather to the disadvantage of the latter.

"What a pity that you cut off those tags!" said Tom; "you will have to buy a new lace."

"Not at all," answered James, "it is easy to open the tags with a stout knife, and you can use them as

often as you like. Of course, they will not be fixed so tightly on the lace next time, but that is of no consequence, as we don't pull by them. Now we will hang it up, and to-morrow I hope for a game. All the boys will stay for it."

Next day, the field was in a fine condition for the game ; and when they had reached the place where they had played at 'Hockey,' George pulled up one of the bramble arches, and moved it forty yards further on ; so that there was now a space of one hundred yards between the goals.

"Are we to kick the ball through the arches," said Tom, "as we did at 'Hockey' ?"

"Yes, it is not unlike 'Hockey,' except that sticks are not used, and the rules are not so stringent. You may stand where you like, and almost do what you like, so that you only get the ball through the goal from the proper side."

"Except touching it with the hands, I suppose," said Tom.

"No, not even except that," replied Seymour, to whom he was speaking. "You may not pick it from the ground ; but if you catch it in its bounce, or as it falls after a kick, you may have your choice of a hand-

kick, or may run off with the ball to the opposite goal."

"What is a hand-kick?" said Tom. "Surely it must be better to run with the ball!"

"That depends upon circumstances. If you see opposite players near, a hand-kick is best, because then you cannot be meddled with."

"I don't see how I can kick with my hand," persisted Tom, who was rather perplexed by these new terms.

"Of course you cannot. But you are allowed to throw the ball in the air, and kick it as it comes down, so that it may fly well over the heads of the other party, and be taken up by some of your own side near the goal. And while you are doing this, no one may touch you or the ball, provided that you do not move from the spot or put the ball on the ground."

"That is, hand-kicking, is it? Well, now for the other plan."

"If you see the coast tolerably clear, you had better keep the ball in your hands and run as fast as you can to the opposite goal. You may not throw it through the goal, but you may put it down as near as you can, and *kick* it through."

"That is easy enough."

"Not so easy ; for the opposite party always put one of their best men at their goal to prevent any such mishap ; and directly you put the ball down, he will try to kick it back, or get so close in front of it that you cannot move it. So there is generally posted a good player to counterbalance the goal-keeper, and the best plan is to throw the ball to him, and help *him* to get it through the goal. Do you understand now ?"

"I think I do," said Tom. "Now they are going to begin."

The boys ran and arranged themselves into two parties, and were placed much in the same way as at "Hockey." The ball was thrown high in the air in the middle space between the goals, and the game began.

After they had played several games, the ball was evidently not so easy in flight as at the beginning ; and in a short time after this defect had been noticed, it increased to such a degree, that if the ball fell on the ground, it would not jump its own height.

"Ball burst !" cried Jackson.

"What a pity !" exclaimed George ; "we must mend it. for we never can play with a ball in this state. And

it is very tiresome to happen just as we had begun to play."

Just at that moment the bell sounded.

"We have been playing for more than two hours," said James ; "so you need not grumble, and the ball just lasted out nicely. I thought there would be a thorn through it, as so many dry blackthorn bushes have been carried through here, leaving hard twigs on the ground. And besides, the ball has been into the hedge more than once."

After the afternoon school-time was over, and the day boys had gone home, James called to Tom White to see how to mend a hole in a football.

"The hole in the leather don't matter at all," said he, "because the leather is only a protection to the bladder."

Having untied the fastenings and removed the bladder, James turned the leather case inside-out, and carefully passed his hand over it.

"What are you doing there?" asked Tom.

"Feeling whether any thorns are sticking in the leather ; for if we left even a bit as large as a needle-point, it would pierce the bladder and let out the air."

"Here's one !" he suddenly exclaimed. "Feel it, for you cannot well see it."

So Tom put his finger to the spot indicated by James, and plainly felt a tiny point that had pierced through the leather.

"That was not the thorn that did the mischief this morning," remarked James ; "for I took that out as we came home. This shows how useful it is to look out carefully. Now for the mending."

He then blew up the bladder again ; and, by placing it near his cheek, he found out the aperture through which the air escaped. Having discovered the hole, he placed a pin through it.

"That's a funny way of mending a hole," said Tom.

"Don't be too hasty," returned James ; "that is only to mark the wound, and if it were twice as large I could mend it. Now look ! Here is a shot, No. 2 they call it, and I drop it into the bladder. There !

"Now, by holding the wounded part of the bladder downwards, the shot rolls right over the hole. Now I pull out the pin, and having got the shot exactly over the hole, I pinch it tightly with my fingers, and keep it there."

"But the shot will not stop up the hole, surely!" said Tom.

"What an impatient boy you are! Take that piece of thin twine and put it round the bladder just by my finger and thumb, and tie it tightly close under the shot. That is right! Now you see I make quite sure of it, by tying it once or twice more, and there we have it."

"So you have, indeed," said Tom, full of admiration. "I see; the air does not come near the hole, and you don't stop up the wound at all, but only keep the air from coming to it."

The engraving will show how this is done. No. 1

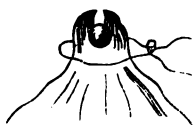


Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

represents the bladder pinched up, the hole at the top. the shot lying within, and the twine put loosely round, ready to be tied.

No. 2 represents it as it appears when completed; and it will be seen that by this mode of proceeding

a hole of almost any moderate size can be mended, by taking a shot or a smooth stone of sufficient dimensions to make a neck round which to tie the twine.

After the ends of the twine had been cut off, James replaced the bladder in the case, inflated it, and laced it together, as has already been described, after previously taking the precaution to press the mended bladder forcibly, in order to see if the cure was complete.

"Now, White," said he, making the renovated ball bounce again and again, "suppose this had been an India-rubber ball, how would you have managed then?"

Tom at once replied, that the only plan would have been to send it to London to be repaired, or to buy a fresh ball.

"You are right there," said Mr. Edward Benson, who had entered the barn while James was lacing the ball; "but I have played a game at football, where even this ball would have been destroyed in ten minutes."

"Was the ground so very full of thorns?" asked Tom.

"No, not particularly; but it was very full of players, for there were not far from a thousand people playing."

"A thousand people!" exclaimed Tom, looking quite astonished.

"Yes," said Mr. Benson; "and that is quite within the mark."

"How *did* you choose sides?" said Tom. "It must have taken a day nearly to do that."

"Not a bad remark, Tom. But we did not choose sides at all. Every one who lived north of a stone in the market-place played on one side, and those who lived south of it played on the other."

"How large were the goals?" said James. "I have heard you mention the game, but I do not remember the goals."

"Well, they were certainly rather curious. There are two water-mills, nearly three miles apart, and their wheels form the goals. The mills are, of course, stopped on the day of the games."

"I suppose, then," said James, "that you have a double case for the ball?"

"No, the case is single; but the interior of the ball is made of cork shavings, like a cricket-ball, and it is quite as hard."

"What are the rules?" inquired James.

"None at all; for if there were rules, they would

never be kept. The object is to goal the ball, and any stratagem is fair. I have often seen a player pitch the ball into the water, jump in after it, and swim with it until stopped by another, who would drag ball and man into shallow water. Then there would be twenty or thirty all in the water at once, fighting for the ball. Swimmers are scarce there, so the ball is often taken nearly half a mile by water."

"It must be very funny," said Tom.

"Yes; there are always some clever fellows who get the ball to the goal by stratagem. Once, the ball was thrown high in the air, and a grand rush of several hundred made to the spot where it fell. Of course, every one was kicking, and no one could see the ball; for the players in the middle were so squeezed, that they could hardly breathe. A cunning player just then threw his hat over the mass; they saw the dark object, called out, 'There it goes!' and dispersed.

"Meanwhile, he picked up the ball, hid it under his coat, and sauntered off to the brook which led to the mill. There he dropped the ball into the stream, and before the other players had found out their mistake, the ball had floated out of sight.

"The crafty player did not follow it closely, but

kept it in view ; so that before the ruse was discovered, ball and player had almost reached the goal. There was a party of the opposite side stationed at the mill ; but they saw the mass of players at a distance, and never suspected that the object of contest was floating past them : and, in another minute, the clever fellow had slipped past the guards, jumped into the water, pushed the ball against the wheel, and held it up in triumph."

" I do wish I had been there ! " said Tom, who was greatly interested in the narrative.

" You would not have seen anything of the game, if you had been there," said Mr. Benson ; " for if you had come near the ball, the breath would have been squeezed out of your small body by the rush of players ; and if you had kept out of the way, you would have seen nothing at all."

" What do they do when they win the game ? " asked James.

" They give a great shout ; and the winning party conduct in great triumph the player who goaled the ball. When they come to the town, he is raised on the shoulders of several stout men, and, holding in both his hands the winning ball, is carried round the town in

great honour and glory, and finally deposited at his own door. When he is placed on the ground, he takes the ball into his house, and hangs it up as a proof of his skill. Some celebrated players have three or four footballs suspended in their houses, and look upon them as most honourable trophies."

"Is not the game rather dangerous?" asked James.

"Not if one is tolerably careful. I never knew any really serious accident happen. Of course, the pressure of so many players is rather painful; for the power of some two or three hundred men, all pressing on the same point, is tremendous. I remember once seeing the ball tossed over a stout wooden park-paling. The players did not get over the fence, but rushed at it and trampled it under foot, as if it had been made of spiders' webs. One moment, and there was a crowd, a tall fence, and a ball disappearing beyond the fence;—next moment, the fence was gone, and the crowd were fighting for the ball on and beyond the spot on which it had stood. I never saw anything before that so well showed the power of accumulated force."

CHAPTER XVI.

"FRENCH AND ENGLISH" — RULES OF THE GAME—A SHARP STRUGGLE—GEORGE'S RUSE — "HOOPS"—"ENCOUNTER"—IRON AND WOODEN HOOPS—"KING OF THE CASTLE"—RULES OF THE GAME—MAKING A CASTLE—"BATTLE FOR THE BANNER."

THE weather was now becoming decidedly cold, and the boys had recourse to other games to keep them warm. If they had not much time at their command, they found that two games, "French and English," and "Hoop," warmed them effectually in a short time. These games shall be described separately.

"French and English" is very simple, being a struggle between two boys, or two sets of boys, to pull each other over a mark in the ground by means of a rope.

Snow had begun to fall slightly, and turned to sleet ; so that all the boys found their usual out-door games ended, and were rather disconsolate, until Mr. Edward Benson recommended "French and English" to them ; and by means of it, they often found themselves in a

burning glow, and so tired with laughing, that they could hardly stand.

The game was played in the following manner :—

First, a chalk-line was drawn upon the middle of the barn-floor, and a stout rope was laid across the line ; the exact middle of the rope being marked with a ring of ink, and laid on the chalk-line.

The boys, being divided into two parties, as nearly equal as possible in strength and weight, then took their places along the rope, the leaders being at the two ends.

At a signal, the boys stooped and took up the rope ; and, after they had been asked whether they were all ready, the words, "One, two, three," were given, and at the word "three," they began hauling with all their power.

Their struggles to pull the opposite party over the rope were enormous in the extreme, and it was difficult to tell to which side victory most inclined.

Sometimes one party had dragged nearly half of their adversaries over the line, when a sudden pull on the opposite side would reverse the positions.

Much of the game depends on the leader ; and a good captain, with a light company under him, will often

vanquish a much stronger opponent, who is not so good a general. George was a capital leader, for he had a quick eye for seeing an advantage, and a ready wit to secure it.

He had more than once baffled his opponents, when they were rather gaining upon him, by making all his men lean heavily back on the rope with a steady drag, that they could not get over.

James discovered this stratagem, and employed it in his turn.

But George had foreseen this event ; and, giving a nod to his party, they stepped forward a pace, and down went their adversaries flat on their backs.

“ Heave ahoy ! ” cried George ; and, turning round, he and his party dragged their opponents over the line before they could recover their feet.

The game is not considered as won, unless the whole of the opposite party have either been dragged over the chalk-line, or have loosened their hold of the rope. No knots are permitted in the cord, and its ends should be whipped with thin string, or plaited, to prevent the strands from unravelling.

Hoops were also favourite toys in the cold weather ; and the more so, because they could be taken up and

laid down at any time, not even requiring that another player should assist in the game, although it was more agreeable if several of the boys had their hoops rolling at the same time.

They had hoops of both kinds, wooden and iron, and played with both ; but the current of favour seemed to set in towards the wooden hoops. With them, the boys played at many a game of " Encounter," a very amusing game, conducted on the principle of the ancient tournaments.

Two boys start at different ends of the playground with their hoops, and, meeting in the middle, each endeavours to knock down the hoop of his antagonist, while his own remains upright.

There is no small skill required in this game, for it is not always easy to make the hoops touch each other at all. Then, a light hoop has little chance against a heavy one, unless it can strike it sideways, for if it were struck directly in front, it would be certainly overset.

Also, a ready hand at recovering a falling or tottering hoop wins many a game that appears to be hopelessly lost.

Wooden hoops, also, give due exercise to the arm ; and there is some tact required in knowing exactly

where to strike a hoop, so as to propel it with the greatest force.

This cannot well be done with iron hoops, and forms one of the objections to them. Moreover, boys always complain that they soon lose their round form, and are awkward to bowl. Still, there is something cheering in the ringing sound of an iron hoop, as it rushes along under the pressure of the curved iron rod that is used instead of a hoop-stick; and as long as boys don't drive them against the legs of unwary passengers, they are very well in their way.

"Do you know another nice warm game, Mr. Benson?" asked Tom, one evening, as they were sitting round the fire, just before going to bed.

"Plenty," answered he; "but whether there is one that will suit you is another question. By-the-bye, there is 'King of the Castle;' you have never played that, I think."

"No," said the boys; "never."

"Well, then, I will tell you how to play it. That mound in the field made me think of it; and it is a capital game for the cold weather. One of you is called 'King,' and stands upon the top of the mound. The rest try to pull or push him off."

"Is not that rather too easy for a game?" asked James. "George could pull me off directly, if he could catch hold of my coat behind; and if two join, I should go off at once."

"True; but it is not allowable to seize the clothes at all. The 'King' may be pushed, but not pulled, except by his hands or legs. If any player grasps his clothes, that player is obliged to retire from the list of assailants until the 'King' is dethroned, and bears the name of 'dummy.' The player who dethrones the 'King' takes his place, and then the 'dummy' is allowed to rejoin the rest of the players."

"I thought that there was a flag used?" said George.

"No; that is another game, called the 'Battle for the Banner;' and which is, I think, even a better game than the 'King of the Castle,' only it requires more players. You are to divide into two parties, and draw lots for the banner; then the winning side take the banner (one of your 'Hare-and-hounds' flags will just do), and fix it on the top of the mound, and arrange themselves round it.

"The other party then attack the mound, and try to carry off the banner, or to pull down the defenders;

who, in their turn, try to throw down the attacking party.

“If a defender is pulled fairly off the mound, he is a prisoner of war, and may not return to the defence ; and if an attacker is thrown down, he is called a ‘dead man,’ and may not return to the attack.

“As in the former game, the player who carries off the banner, or who makes prisoner the last defender, becomes captain for the next game. The same rules as to the grasp, &c., apply to this game, as well as to the ‘King of the Castle.’ ”

So, after the next morning’s school, the boys adjourned to the field, and inspected the mound.

George pronounced that with a little alteration it would make a capital castle ; and, taking Jackson with him, soon returned, bringing two pickaxes and two spades ; with which the four eldest boys set to work under James’s direction.

Tom was quite astonished to see how well and rapidly they worked ; and could better understand how they had made their gymnasium, to which he was looking forward.

In ten minutes, some dangerous holes had been stopped up, several sharp stones and protruding ~~stakes~~

removed ; and the implements having been re] the boys began to play at ' King of the Castle '— being the first king. .

They enjoyed the game exceedingly ; and, in the noon, induced the day-boys to stay, in order that might play at the " Battle of the Banner."

CHAPTER XVII.

FALL OF SNOW—SNOW-BALL—VARIOUS SNOW GAMES—"SNOW-GIANT"
—BRINGING IN MATERIAL—CARVING THE STATUE—FAILURE OF
HIS NOSE—A NEW HEAD MADE—THE "SNOW-IMAGE"—THE
"SNOW-CASTLE"—RAISING THE WALLS—ICING THE BATTLE-
MENTS—THE SIEGE—THE ATTACK—A SORTIE—FORLORN HOPE—
MAKING PRISONERS—TAKING THE FORT—FILLING THE MAGAZINE
—A JUDICIOUS RESERVE.

As the days passed on, the weather became gradually colder and more winterly ; until, one morning, when the boys got up, they saw all the country round deep covered with snow, the branches laden with their white mantle, and the flakes still thickly falling.

"Oh, dear !" cried Tom, as he looked out of window ;
"there is an end of all our play now."

"An end !" answered Seymour ; "you mean a beginning, surely."

"Why, what can we play at, when the snow is a foot deep ?" said Tom, rather peevishly ; for he was cold, and the prospect was not enlivening.

"That is just what we like," answered Seymour
"Last year we did not have half snow enough; but
this year we shall manage capitally, if it will only lie."

"There is nothing but 'Snow-balls,'" said Tom;
"and I don't like having a cold snow-ball in my face, or
down my neck; and I don't want to freeze my fingers
by putting them into the snow; they are cold enough
now," said he, blowing the tips of his fingers.

"You have never played at snow-balls, I know,"
answered Seymour.

"How did you know that?"

"Because, if you had ever played, you would not
have talked such nonsense about cold fingers. Why,
in five minutes your hands will be burning hot, how-
ever cold they might have been when you began. And
there are all sorts of snow games, besides simple snow-
ball."

"What are they?" asked Tom.

"Oh, I hardly know; because, you see, one invents
games on the spur of the moment. There is the 'Snow-
giant,' and the 'Snow-castle;' both capital fun, especially
the castle. Then we try which party can make the
biggest snow-ball; and you cannot think what huge
ones we make."

"How large?" said Tom; "as large as the globes in the study?"

"Bah!" replied Seymour, with scorn; "that would be nothing. Why, we have made snow-balls that you could not look over even on tip-toe; and so heavy, that we could only roll them along by the help of levers. Then, we make a snow pillar, and put a shilling in the midst of it, and throw at it with stones from a distance; whoever knocks the shilling out of the heap keeps it."

"I did not think there were half so many snow-games," said Tom. "I have often seen boys playing at snow-balls; and once they threw one at me, and hit me in the neck; so I did not like to play at the game."

"Wait until the snow stops," said Seymour, "and see if we do not have some capital games. When there is much snow, the day-boys remain here all day, so that we shall have plenty of players. I don't think that they will come at all to-day; for when it snows so heavily, Dr. Benson tells them to stay at home, and to make doubly sure of their lessons."

All that day the snow continued to fall; but in the succeeding night it ceased, and the following morning presented a clear bright sky.

After their early school, the boys proposed a game at snow-ball, but the proposition was rejected by James, who said that it would be a shame to waste such beautiful deep snow by mere snow-balling ; and suggested a 'Snow-giant' in the farm-yard, and a 'Snow-castle' in the field.

"Why do you put the Giant in the farm-yard?" asked Tom.

"Because he is close to the school-room, so that we can work at him in odd minutes. And, besides, he won't require a quarter of the material that will be wanted for the 'Castle.' "

George now said that he should go and fetch some spades ; while James went off, and soon returned with an old tea-tray of considerable size, which he entrusted to Tom and Wilson.

The party now adjourned to the yard ; and James, having fixed on a convenient spot for the snow statue, began with his spade to clear away a circular space.

Meanwhile, the other boys were not idle. Tom and Wilson were directed to carry their tray into all the corners, and between the stacks, to slide the tray under the snow, to lift it up with the layer of snow upon

it, and to bring it to James, who was the chief sculptor.

The other boys went in pairs to different ends of the farm-yard, as far from the sculptors as possible. Then, making snow-balls with their hands, as large as they could, they put them on the ground, and rolled them towards James.

By this mode of proceeding, the balls rapidly increased in size ; until, when they had reached the spot where the image was to be, they were great, compact snow-masses.

Having left them within reach of the sculptors, the boys again went off, and rolled fresh balls up ; so that there was a constant supply.

James and George continued to make use of these great balls, and of the snow which Tom and Wilson continually deposited in a heap close by them, and which, being softer, and less compressed than that of the balls, was useful in moulding ornaments or projections on the figure.

Their mode of sculpturing was as follows :—

First, James and George set to work with their spades, and made a solid and compact heap of snow, nearly six feet in height, but quite shapeless.

Then James, who had already drawn a sketch of the figure, and stuck it on a tree close at hand, in order to guide George and himself, cut the snow-heap rudely into a cylindrical form with the spade, and afterwards, with a great knife and a trowel, worked out some of the lineaments of the intended figure.

The snow that was pared off was now applied at the top, until the requisite height was reached. A pair of steps had been used for some time, as the top of the figure was much too high to be reached while the sculptors stood on the ground.

James now proceeded, with knife and trowel, to form the figure, that of a man dressed in a long mantle, falling in bold folds on the ground. One arm lay by his side, and the other was crossed on his breast. The arms were clothed in large hanging sleeves, and had a good effect.

Up to this time the statue was without a head, and was now ready for that necessary member.

Another great snow-ball was now lifted up the steps, and deposited carefully on the snow shoulders; on which a stout neck had already been made, with a slight cavity to receive the head. A stick about two feet long, pointed at both ends, had been also thrust into the

neck, so that about a foot of it projected, and served as a peg to make the head more secure.

By means of knife and trowel, together with the help of the loose snow, which could be moulded into any shape, the statue was gifted with a venerable head, decorated with a long beard, flowing almost down to his girdle.

There was a slight difficulty about making his nose and eye-brows ; for, in spite of all their efforts, either the nose tumbled off, or else it looked, as James confessed, more like a potato than a respectable nose.

However, Mr. Edward Benson had been watching them for some time, and when the boys came to him for help, as they generally did in their difficulties, he finished the business speedily enough.

"Look here, James !" said he, "mounting the steps ; "you have not taken care to mould your snow-ball properly before you put it on the shoulders, and have not left sufficient material wherewith to make a proper countenance. And it is not pressed nearly hard enough."

While he was speaking, he took off the head, threw it on the ground, and proceeded to mould another,

quite out of all shape, as the boys thought—for it was more oval than round—and when he put it on the statue, the oval rested on its side, and near one end.

However, they were quite wrong ; for as Mr. Edward had left plenty of material to cut into, he was not obliged to dab extra pieces of snow on the face, which always fell off again. And in ten minutes a fine strong-featured old gentleman of the ancient times was exhibited.

“One thing more,” said Mr. Edward ; and taking a piece of stick, he cut it into two pegs, and drove them into the centre of the eyes, so as to make the pupils.

“Go and fetch Dr. Benson !” said he, when the statue was quite finished.

So Tom ran away in great glee, and soon returned in company with the Doctor, who bestowed great commendation on the piece of sculpture.

“That is, certainly, the best snow-man I have seen,” said he ; “and I have seen many. But it does not quite equal the Snow Image of which Hawthorn writes.”

“What is that, sir ?” asked Jackson.

"Do not you know it?" said the Doctor. "It is one of the most graceful little tales ever written. I will lend it you this evening, and we will read it aloud."

This was done; and all the boys who had not read the tale, were delighted with the story of the little snow-sister, sparkling in the west wind, and drooping before the warm fire. Even those who knew the story well, were charmed with the exquisite manner in which the tale is told; and some of them saw that more was meant than meets the ear.

Before the boys left the farm-yard in the morning, Tom turned round to take a last look at the snow-man, and observed to James that it looked rather too lanky.

"I did it on purpose," said James; "for the snow will settle down, and you will see that by to-morrow the man will be seven or eight inches shorter than he is now."

"That is the end of our man, then?" said Tom.

"No! not at all. We let him stand for some days to get firm, and then we knock him to bits with snow-balls. The boy who can knock out the pointed stick that holds up his head, wins the game. As to his

body, we may throw as much as we like ; and except altering the shape, and destroying the folds, we shall not hurt it at all."

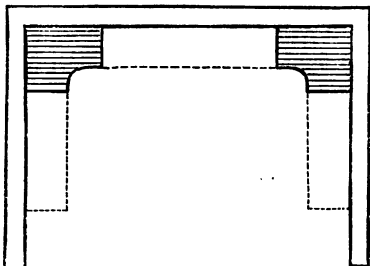
Next day, they proceeded into the field, and set to work at their castle ; which was made in the following way :—

James traced on the snow an oblong, about eight feet in length and six in width, and cleared the snow from it. He then drove several pointed stakes into the ground, one at each corner, and two or three on each side.

The rest of the boys were busily employed in rolling great snow-balls towards him, as they had done previously, and with the snow thus collected, he raised a wall about five feet high, and tolerably thick, on three sides of the oblong, so that the figure was formed as is seen in the plan on page 247.

One side was left entirely open. The dotted lines represent a step which James made, about a foot or more in height ; and at the two corners he raised another step upon the first, six inches higher, so that boys mounted upon it might be able to use their arms freely. The shaded lines represent the second step.

In the centre was piled a large heap of snow, for the purpose of making balls.



By the time that the walls had been raised, evening had come on, and the boys were obliged to return home.

In the morning they eagerly returned to their fortification.

"Why!" cried Tom, running into it, mounting the step, and putting his hand on the parapet, "it is as hard and smooth as ice. Why is it so? the snow-man is not frozen like the castle."

"It *is* ice," said James. "George and I went to it last night, and as it was a sharp frost, we each of us carried a big watering-pot, and we watered it all over. It was freezing so fast that the water froze imme-

diately, and covered the walls with a sheet of ice in ten minutes. Snow-balls will not hurt it much, now.

"Let us begin to play, then!" said Tom.

"Very good; we draw lots for being defenders or assailants. Ah! we are assailants this time. Get in, George, and take your men with you."

So George ran off, followed by his troop. When inside, all the party, except George, set to work at manufacturing snow-balls—George himself examining every part of the wall, and proving the solidity of the steps.

James and his party were now engaged in the same manufacture; and in a few minutes, a flag appearing in the centre of the castle gave the signal that the occupants were ready.

"Do we capture the flag?" said Tom.

"No!" replied Jackson; "because we may only attack on the three walled sides. We have to drive the defenders out."

"But we shall never do that!" observed Tom.

"Indeed we shall, if we are only bold enough. For we have all the field at our command to make snow-balls of, while they have only that which is inside, and

when they can resist no longer, they are obliged to yield."

"But can they not send out and fetch more snow?"

"Certainly; that is what we call a sortie; and if they like, they may rush out and drive us back. But then, if we can catch either of them, he is our prisoner, and may not join in the defence."

"Then the attacking party is sure to drive out the defenders, I suppose."

"Tolerably certain, as it is in actual warfare; but a good captain will sometimes, by judicious sorties, keep his assailants at bay for a very long time. Now, pick up a good armful of snow-balls, and we shall attack."

So the party rushed to the snow fort, and were received by a furious volley from the defenders. Then the captains cheered on their men, and the battle raged. Suddenly out shot George, Williams, Seymour, and Shepherd, and made a desperate attack on the assailants. After a few minutes, they were driven in again; but their object had been attained; for under cover of the sortie, Masterman and Price had brought in several tray-loads of snow, with which they renewed their supply of ammunition.

"They shall not do *that* again," said James; and he

posted Knight and Miller to guard the gate of the fortress, with orders to give notice of an attempted sortie ; and if an individual player came out, to drive him back.

Once or twice, Masterman made an effort ; but the volleys of snow-balls forced him to retreat under cover before he could secure any snow.

“ Now,” cried James, “ for a rush !—they have not much ammunition left. Hurrah ! ”

The assailing party here made a bold rush up to the very walls, in spite of the well-aimed snow-balls which had been reserved by the garrison. Leaping in the air, they discharged their missiles at the crouching defenders, who had only one chance now—that of a sortie, to obtain another supply of snow.

This they made ; but four of the garrison were made prisoners, and the other two speedily evacuated the fort.

“ Now for our turn,” said James, taking down the flag. “ Every one of you run out, and fetch as much snow as you can ; and when you have made a great heap in the fort, pile another heap just outside, so that we may not have to run far for ammunition. They

1 won't notice it, for they are all busy at making snow-balls themselves."

His orders were attended to, and two great heaps of snow were the result; so that, by reason of the large stock of ammunitino, the garrison were enabled to hold out until the school-bell rung, much to the delight of Tom, who, although he received some hard raps in his face from the enemy's missiles, only returned the favour with more vigour.

"Very well played, White," said Seymour, as they returned. "You don't seem to care so much for the snow-balls as you thought you should."

"I did not know what fun it was," replied Tom. "My hands and face are so hot, that I feel as if they were on fire."

"I told you so," said Seymour; "and you'll always find that running about is twenty times a better way of warming yourself than sticking your knees into a fire."

The "Snow-castle" became a favourite game with the boys, and they constantly played, until a thaw came, and destroyed their fort.

The "Snow-man" had long ago been pelted to a shapeless mass; and the boys had to remain in-doors,

and to employ themselves in the barn. In walking to and fro, they found their stilts exceedingly useful; for nothing else could have kept them from the mud, which was formed very deeply by the melted snow.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A FLOOD AND A FROST—GOOD ICE—SKATING PREPARATIONS—
HOW TO CARRY A GIMLET—FATAL ACCIDENT—OXFORD CLUB
SKATES—LOOSE STRAPPING—REAL USE OF STRAPS—TOM PUTS
ON SKATES—EDWARD BENSON CARRIES HIM OFF—TOM'S FALL
—DESERTED—HOW TO RISE ON SKATES—MATHEMATICAL SKATING
—FIGURE SKATING—TOM'S SUCCESS.

As is usual at this time of the year, the thaw was rapid ; and in a day or two, the snow had disappeared. The consequence of this sudden conversion of so much ice into water was, that the brook that ran within a short walk of the house overflowed, and covered a large extent of flat country with water.

Hardly had the water fairly spread itself, before a second frost came on, and in three days the surface of the water was covered with ice, strong enough to bear any reasonable weight, and only a few inches in depth, so that if it should give way, no harm would be done.

On the second evening of the frost, Mr. Edward Benson called his brothers, and started off for the

frozen floods, to try if the ice would be sufficiently strong.

He took his skates with him, as did the two boys; and after they had tested the ice with their sticks, they put on their skates, and ventured upon its surface.

"Don't go so fast, Edward!" exclaimed George; "you will go through to a certainty."

But he rather increased his speed than diminished it, and flew over the ice at a pace that left his brothers far behind.

After he had thus been over every part of it, he came back to James and George, and asked them why they wanted him to slacken pace.

When they told their reasons—namely, that they feared the ice giving way—he explained to them that the faster a person could glide, the safer was the ice; just as a bullet, that would sink rapidly to the bottom of the sea if merely dropped into the water, would skim for many hundred yards on its surface if shot horizontally from a gun.

After executing several manœuvres, of which we shall afterwards speak, he took off his skates, and returned home, bringing a favourable report.

Next morning, when the boys were at breakfast, they were informed that Mr. Benson had asked the Doctor to give a holiday, for the purpose of taking advantage of the frost and the good ice ; and that the favour had been granted.

The boys immediately gave three cheers for Mr. Edward ; and, as an after-thought, three more for the Doctor.

Mr. Benson, however, rather damped their joy by saying that the favour only extended to boys who did not tumble down, and that if any one fell on the ice, he was to return to the school-room.

They saw, however, by his eye, that it was only a joke ; and began to search for their skates immediately after the conclusion of the meal.

"Can you skate, Tom ?" asked Mr. Benson.

"No, sir," said Tom ; "but I should like to learn : only I have no skates."

"We have a pair or two extra," said Mr. Benson, "that belonged to my brothers when they were much smaller, and they will about fit you."

So George was asked to bring another pair of skates for Tom ; and the whole party proceeded to the ice.

When they reached the spot where they had skated on the previous evening, they set down three camp-stools which they had brought with them ; and out of a bag, carried by Wilson, were produced one or two small gimlets, a brad-awl, an old duster, and a little box containing lard.

Tom looked at the preparations with some awe ; but James told him that they were not all absolutely necessary, and that a person might manage very well with only a gimlet ; taking, however, the precaution to have one that screwed into a wooden guard.

"You are right there," said Mr. Benson. "Only last year I saw a man killed by carrying in his pocket an unguarded gimlet. He was rather hurried, and hastily slipped it into his pocket, forgetting to put the guard on. In the course of the evening, he caught his foot against a stone frozen into the ice, and fell on his back. The blow rather stunned him ; and when he rose, he found that the gimlet had been driven into his back. He drew it out, and not feeling much the worse for it, foolishly insisted on walking home. In two days a violent inflammation took place, and he died from the effects of the wound."

"What curious skates you have, Mr. Edward !" said

Jackson. "I never saw such a pair before. And you don't seem to have much strapping with them."

"No," said he ; "that is one of their advantages. They are called the 'Oxford Club Skate,' and are made



with great care. You see, there is only one wide strap over the toes, with a double buckle for convenience of fastening, and the usual heel-strap—nothing more ; so the instep is not confined, as is generally the case with the ordinary strap."

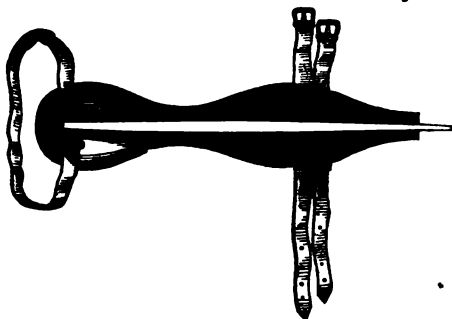
"I see that," said Jackson ; "but I could never skate with so little strapping as that. Why, I always pull my straps as tight as I can ; and unless they are tight I can't skate."

"Then that is the reason why you skate so awkwardly," rejoined Mr. Benson. "It is no more possible

to skate well in tight skates than to dance well in tight boots. See! I can pass my finger under either of my straps."

"How *can* you keep on the skates, then?" asked Jackson.

"*By depending on the balance and not on the straps,*" said he: "that is the golden rule in skating. The only use of the strap is to keep the skate from falling off the foot when it is raised from the ice. When I have skated for a quarter of an hour or so, I shall



probably loosen my straps another hole. I want you to examine the under side of these skates; you will see *that the steel is much wider in the middle than at either*

end, so that each edge makes a curve. And if you look at the skate while on the ice, you will see that the steel is made with rather a sharp curve from the point to the heel. So, by taking advantage of these curves, I can cut a circle only a few inches in diameter."

In the mean time, George had been kindly fitting a pair of skates on Tom, and having done so, picked him up in his arms, and put him down on the ice.

Scarcely had poor Tom's skates touched the ice, than one foot flew one way, one another, and if he had not been saved by George, would have fallen flat on his back.

"It's very slippery on skates," said Tom; "I shall never stand by myself."

"Pooh!" said George; "we're all as bad as this at first. Why, look at Edward there, how he is sailing about, and cutting circles, and doing all kinds of figures. He was just as frightened as you are, the first time he tried."

So Tom tried again; but, partly from fright, and partly from want of practice, his ankles would not keep still, but bent as if they had been broken.

"Keep those ankles stiff!" said George. "There

you go again!" he exclaimed, as he saved Tom from another fall. "Oh, here's Edward; he will set you right."

"What's the matter here?" asked Edward, as he skated past them; and then, spinning round on one foot, swept backwards in a circle round them.

"Do show Tom White how to keep on his legs! I am quite tired with holding him."

"Very good," said he; and he picked up Tom in his arms, and went off with him.

"How do you like the movement?" said he to Tom.

"It is beautiful," said Tom; "and I wish I could do it myself. But, Mr. Edward, how *could* you go backwards, and how funny it must feel!"

"Do you think so?" said he. "What is your opinion now?"

And in a moment Tom felt himself suddenly spin round in Mr. Edward's arms, and perceived that he was going backwards at the same rapid pace.

"It's very nice," said he; "but it rather frightens me."

"It don't frighten *me*," said Mr. Benson; "but here *we* are."

So he suddenly twirled round several times in the same spot, making Tom quite giddy; and when he began to recover his senses, he found himself standing on the ice, supported by Mr. Benson.

"Now, Tom," said he, "put your feet close together, and don't let them separate on any pretext whatever. Now, strike out as you see me doing. No, no! do not try to *walk*, or down you go. See here!"

Tom tried his best, and actually scrambled forward very nearly a yard without falling.

"That's better," said Mr. Benson: "good morning!" And he skated off.

"Mr. Edward!" cried Tom, "Mr. Edward! please don't go away."

"Why not?" said he.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Tom, his knees shaking, and his feet getting farther apart every moment; "I shall fall! I shall fall!"

And just as he said so, one foot went away from him, followed by the other, and down he went.

"Hurt?" asked Mr. Benson.

"Not much," said Tom.

"Then get up, and I'll set you straight again."

"I can't get up," said Tom, struggling violently on the ice; "my feet won't stay where I put them."

"Get on your hands and knees, then," said Mr. Benson. "Now, kneel upright. Now, keep your left knee on the ice, and put your right foot forward as if you meant to be kneeling on one knee. That's right. Now, then, one bold effort, and you are on your feet."

Tom here rose successfully, but dared not advance one step.

"Now," said Mr. Benson, "as you know how to get up when you tumble, I shall go and teach James how to cut a three. Good bye!"

"Please, don't go, Mr. Edward!" cried Tom: but uselessly; for off shot Mr. Benson, leaving poor Tom all alone in the midst of the ice.

At first he seemed in danger of crying, but brought his courage to bear, and did his best. After suffering a few falls, and finding that there was no one to catch him if he fell, he found out how to stand, and in a short time was able to progress, though slowly and awkwardly. After a while he managed to take advantage of a slight wind, and joined the rest of the party.

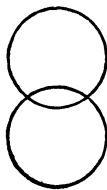
"Well done, White!" exclaimed George, on seeing

him. "I wanted to go and help you, when I saw you floundering out in the distance, and flourishing your arms about as if you were a windmill; but Edward would not let me, for he said that you would learn better by yourself."

"Quite right," said Mr. Benson: "you cannot learn skating by books, or by theory, or by anything but actual practice. You may have a skater to teach you on the ice; but otherwise, it is just time wasted. Don't you remember our mathematical friend, James, who learned to skate from theory?"

Here James and George began to laugh, and Tom asked what was the incident.

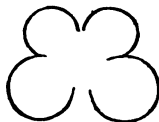
"Why," said Mr. Benson, "he was looking at me while I was cutting the figure eight; and after inspecting for some time, said that it was easy and simple enough, for it was only shifting the centre of gravity from one foot to the other. So he put on a pair of skates to show me; only, unfortunately, he shifted the centre of gravity from both feet at once, and got such a thump on the ice, that *our* gravity was disturbed, and, I am afraid, his temper also."



"What do you mean by 'cutting the figure eight?'" said Tom.

"This," said Mr. Benson, describing a circle with his right foot, and then crossing the left foot over it, and making another circle with it.

"And here is a 'three,'" said he. "This is done by describing a circle forwards with the outside edge of one foot, and then, spinning suddenly round on the same foot, the skater describes the remainder of the figure backwards."



He then showed Tom how to cut "two threes together," as is shown in the margin, and afterwards cut various figures on the ice, which are shown in the accompanying engraving.



So, before the frost ended, Tom was able to get along at a good pace, although he could not make any threes or eights; and hoped that, when he began another

year at Dr. Benson's, he should be taught to skate well, and also to go through the promised course of gymnastics, under the superintendence of Mr. Edward Benson.

THE END.



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